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OF 1739-48

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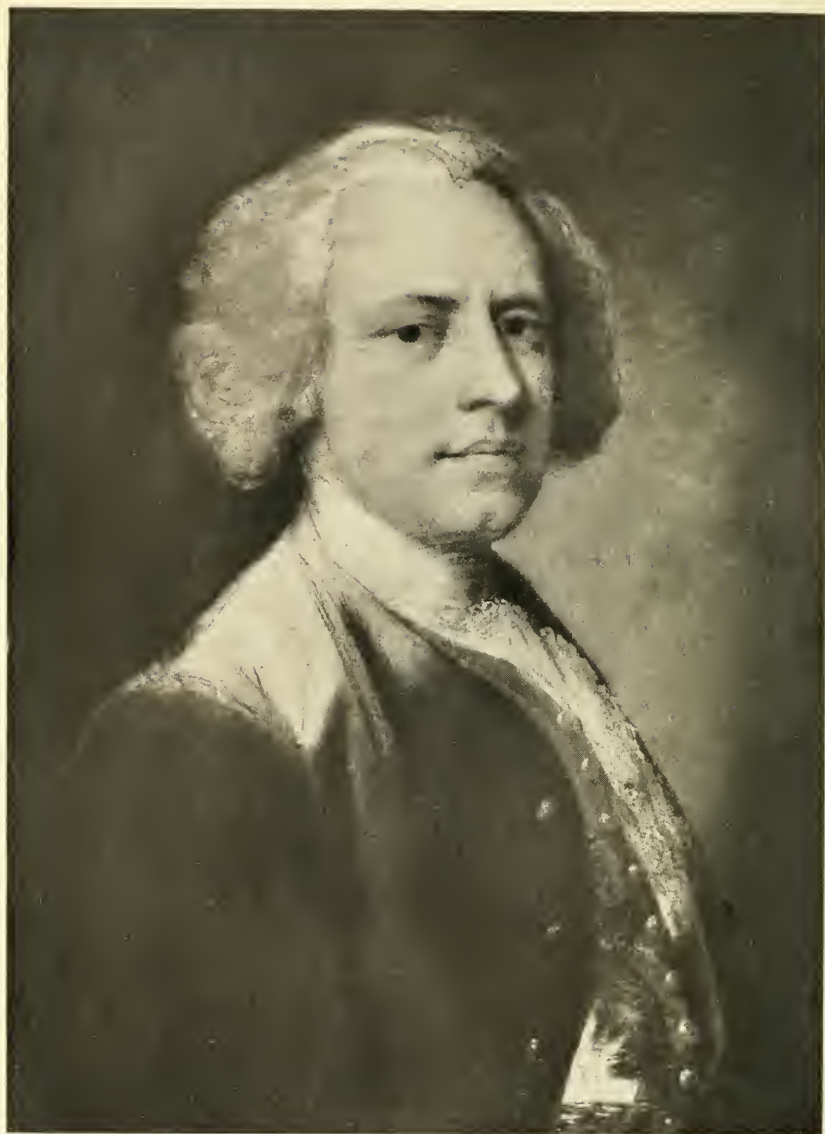
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ADMIRAL SIR GEORGE ANSON



THE NAVY IN THE WAR  
OF 1739-48

BY

H. W. RICHMOND

REAR-ADMIRAL

VOLUME III

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## CHAPTER I

### CAPE BRETON AND THE WESTERN SQUADRON 1746

WE left Warren in June 1745 in command at Louisbourg as Governor of the fortress and Commander-in-Chief of the naval forces<sup>1</sup> in the neighbouring waters. His first care after taking possession was to put the place in a proper state of defence, after which he intended sending out his cruisers to operate against the French Trade bound to and from Canada. The smallness of his squadron however did not permit him to detach many vessels, for it was necessary to keep a force continually at Louisbourg to guard against attempts which still might be expected to be coming overseas; and he anxiously awaited the reinforcements for the garrison for which he had written in his first letters after the capture, whose arrival would permit freedom of action to his squadron. He had been informed that two regiments were to be sent from Gibraltar; but in October he learned—through the columns of the Boston papers—that Admiral Townsend had sailed from Gibraltar in the beginning of August without any transports. As at about the same time he heard that a squadron of from seven to nine ships was on its way from Toulon to assist in the recovery of Cape Breton, and that a strong force of some 6000 mixed Canadian levies was being prepared with the same object, he was under some uneasiness for the security of Louisbourg until the winter should advance and make operations both by land and sea impossible.

A report that a squadron of four ships, part of a larger force under Périer de Salvert, had put into La Crow harbour in Newfoundland reached him on October 3rd by the 'Lark,' one of the ships detached for the fishery protection. He at once sent a division of four ships under Captain Edwards in quest of them; but they were not found and Edwards returned to Louisbourg. This was the only disturbance or threat that occurred, and when the lateness of the season made it certain that no further attempts could be made against Cape Breton, Warren sent the North American Trade home under escort of four of his squadron, and prepared the harbour for defence against sea attack, by mooring a boom across the entrance, and covering it by a sloop fitted as a fireship. He himself then went down to Boston for the

<sup>1</sup> 'Superbe,' 'Sunderland,' 'Canterbury,' 'Vigilant,' 'Chester' and five sloops at Louisbourg. 'Princess Mary,' 'Hector' and 'Lark' at Newfoundland.

winter, where he concerned himself with measures for improvement of the organisation of the coastal defence of the Northern American colonies.

The winter passed without any alarms. The troops from Gibraltar did not arrive until the following April. Escorted by three 44 gun ships<sup>1</sup> they had reached North America in the late autumn, but the season being then too far advanced for them to get into Cape Breton, they had wintered in Virginia, and had sailed for Louisbourg as soon as the harbour was reported open. Additions to the squadron followed rapidly. A fortnight after the appearance of the troops Admiral Isaac Townsend came in from Antigua bringing with him the 'Kingston' 60, 'Pembroke' 60, and 'Kinsale' 44; and finally a still further reinforcement arrived on May 22nd, when Commodore Knowles, who had been appointed Governor in place of Warren, joined him with the 'Norwich' and 'Canterbury,' on board of which were 300 troops of Frampton's regiment for the garrison. These additions to the naval and military forces put the place in a good condition for defence.

It had been fully anticipated by the Admiralty that the enemy would make an attempt to recover Cape Breton in the spring of 1746, and Townsend was told that his first duty was to give his utmost assistance to the Governor, by means of his seamen and marines, in strengthening and repairing the fortifications. His instructions, dated March 14th<sup>2</sup>, ran as follows:

"You are to employ His Majesty's ships under your command in cruising at sea or on such other services as shall be judged proper, having always a strict regard to the preservation of the town of Louisbourg, and to advise from time to time with the Governor concerning the necessary measures for the supply of the garrison with all necessaries as well as for its protection and defence against the enemy.

"We do also recommend it to you to employ some of your ships to cruise in the fair way for intercepting the ships which pass between France and Canada, whom they are to look out for diligently, and endeavour to take or destroy them, which may not only contribute to the advantage and safety of Louisbourg but greatly distress the French settlements in that part of the world."

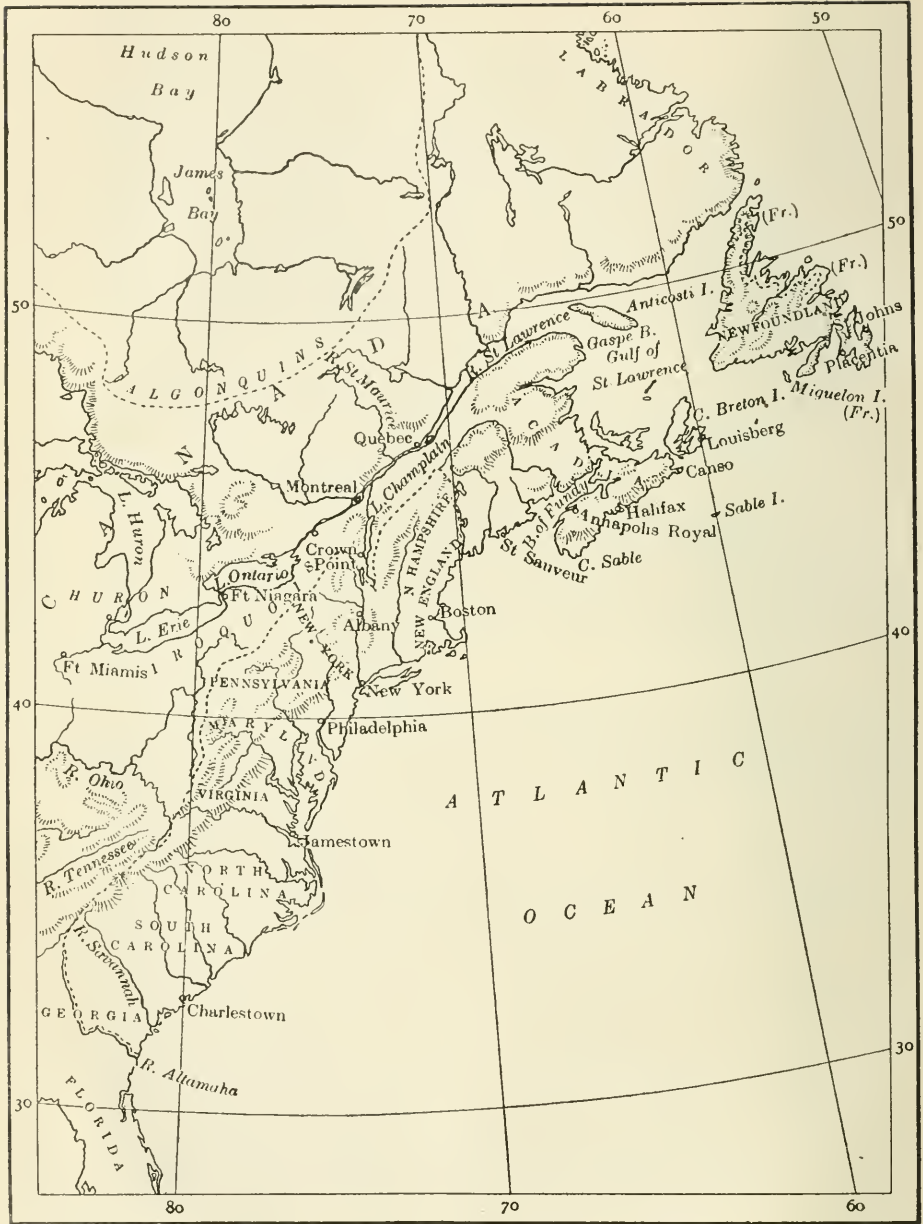
Besides this, Townsend was informed that Warren had been directed to consult with the Governments of the North American colonies in order to solicit them to send men and supplies of all kinds for the defence of Louisbourg, and also "to concert measures with the said Governments for attempting new conquests upon the enemy if the same shall be judged advisable and proper...as may remove so troublesome a neighbour as the French will always be to their settlements<sup>3</sup>"; and if

<sup>1</sup> 'Fowey,' 'Dover' and 'Torrington.'

<sup>2</sup> They were brought out by Knowles in the 'Canterbury.'

<sup>3</sup> One of the persistent causes of the expansion of the Empire.





THE NORTHERN COLONIES AND CANADA, 1746



the Colonial Governments should project any attempts upon the enemy's possessions wherein the assistance of the navy was necessary, Townsend was directed to consult with Warren and Knowles, and to put such a number of ships of the line under Warren's command as should be agreed upon, "being not less in number than eight nor exceeding ten, besides smaller frigates" to enable him to put the proposal into execution. When the season for action at sea should be over, Townsend was again to consult with his colleagues as to whether any or what ships would be necessary to remain at Louisbourg, and what should be sent to cruise for the protection of the Southern Colonies, about Cuba, and in the Straits of Florida to intercept Spanish trade; which ships were to be put under Commodore Knowles<sup>1</sup>. Having so disposed the ships and arranged convoy for the Newfoundland trade to England and Portugal, he was to take the remainder to Spithead.

On June 3rd Warren transferred his office to Knowles, and embarked on board the 'Chester,' sailing for Boston on the 5th to confer with the Government in accordance with the instructions quoted. He had hardly got clear of the harbour on the 6th June when the 'Chester' was met by a sloop from England bringing a letter informing him that it had been decided to send a large expedition out to capture Quebec, and that preparations for the campaign were to be pressed forward at once. This news altered the whole situation, and Warren immediately returned to Louisbourg to discuss the proposals with the officers of the squadron and the garrison.

This return of the Ministry to the offensive against the enemy's colonial possessions was the outcome of the possession of Cape Breton. The decision to follow up that success by an attack upon Canada had not been made immediately the news of the capture of Louisbourg reached England, for the country was then fully occupied with the suppression of the Jacobite rising. In the months following August 1745 the situation in England was far too precarious for thoughts to be turned from the immediate danger at home; but when the French attempt at invasion was frustrated and the army of Prince Charles was in full retreat, the idea of availing themselves of the opening provided by the colonial success, received attention at the hands of the Administration.

The proposal to send an expedition to Quebec was brought forward by the Duke of Bedford, to whom, as First Lord of the Admiralty, the

<sup>1</sup> The conditions of Knowles's appointment are somewhat curious. He was Governor of the fortress with the rank of Commodore; but his governorship notwithstanding, he was under the orders of the naval Commander-in-Chief, and he was also free to proceed upon a cruise so far south as Florida in the winter season, and to conduct minor naval offensive operations against French settlements.

views of Shirley and Warren had been written<sup>1</sup>. He transmitted the suggestion to the Duke of Newcastle, who appointed a Committee consisting of the First Lord, the Master-General of the Ordnance<sup>2</sup>, and Lieutenant-General James St Clair, the last-named being an officer of Canadian experience to whom the command of the expedition was to be entrusted. This Committee was directed to report what force by land and sea and what supplies would be required; in what time these forces and supplies could be got ready; how long they would take to reach America; and in what month they should arrive there.

The Committee reported on March 30th. They considered that not less than 3500 troops should be sent from England; these, together with the regiments sent from the garrison of Gibraltar in the preceding summer and General Frampton's regiment which was already under orders to proceed to America, would make up a total of 5000 men, a force sufficient to conquer Canada. At least one regiment would need to be raised locally to garrison Louisbourg while the expedition was in progress, and a naval force of 20 ships or sloops of war would be required. So far as ordnance was concerned, the ships' guns could be used in shore batteries, and the same quantity of ordnance stores would be required as had been sent in 1711 in the expedition under Hovenden Walker. Transports and convoy could be ready in a month if orders were given at once. The expedition should arrive by the middle of July which, the Committee considered, would leave ample time to conquer Canada before the winter. They recommended that Warren, who was then Governor of Louisbourg, and the Governors of Massachusetts and New York, should be informed at once and directed to make ready, and that the Governors of the several colonies should be ordered to procure transports for carrying the forces already in Louisbourg up the St Lawrence, and also to get together as many armed vessels as the provinces could supply, which were to be placed under the orders of the naval Commander-in-Chief.

As a result of this favourable report, which was considered by the Committee of Council on April 3rd<sup>3</sup>, it was decided to put the proposal into execution. The plan of operations closely resembled that adopted by Pitt in later years. The attack was to be delivered on two routes,

<sup>1</sup> "The proposals which you and Governor Shirley have transmitted hither for the reduction of Canada to his Majesty's obedience have had such weight with his Majesty's council that a resolution has been taken to attempt it...." Corbett to Warren, April 7th, 1746. S. P. Dom. Naval, 30.

<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Montague. Marshal Wade, as Lieut.-General of the Ordnance, was to sit in his absence.

<sup>3</sup> Council meeting at Lord Harrington's. Present, the Lord Chancellor, Duke of Bedford, Earl of Harrington, Mr Pelham, Duke of Newcastle. S. P. Dom. Various, v.

one up the St Lawrence on Quebec, and the other from Albany on Montreal. The St Lawrence column was to be under the command of Lieut.-General St Clair and to consist of the troops coming from England, those already in Louisbourg, and some colonial troops which were to join St Clair at Louisbourg. These latter were to be raised in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island, and from them the force to garrison Louisbourg in the absence of the regular troops would be provided. The escort would consist of Warren's squadron, the ships from England and the local armed craft. The Montreal column was to be found from troops raised in New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia under the command of Brigadier-General William Gooch, Lieut.-Governor of Virginia. It was to assemble at Albany and march direct on Montreal by the Lake Champlain route.

Once the Government had made the decision they lost no time in setting about the business. The Committee's reply was dated the 30th March. On the 9th April a letter was written apprising Warren of the general plan of the expedition and directing him to make the necessary preparations; and orders as to the troops and transports were at once issued. The letter to Warren was taken by the sloop 'Hinchinbrook,' which arrived off Cape Breton on the 6th June, and as we have seen was only just in time to catch him. He at once returned to Louisbourg, where the naval Commander-in-Chief called a council of war to consider the orders, at which Townsend, Warren, Knowles, Colonel Warburton (the Lieut.-Governor), Sir William Pepperell, three colonels and a major were present. It was decided that Warren should resume his journey to Boston and there make arrangements about the transports, that every effort should be made to strengthen the defences of the harbour that it might be left in security while the expedition was in progress; and that ships should be sent forthwith to cruise in the mouth of the St Lawrence to intercept the supplies which would be coming from France. The 'Kinsale' was sent for this purpose into the approaches of the Gulf, other ships were stationed off the Banks of Newfoundland, and the remainder of the squadron remained at Louisbourg in order to supply the necessary labour on the defences, since the garrison by itself was insufficient to do all the work required.

This local council did not look upon the expedition with wholly favourable eyes. The situation had changed considerably in the interval since the proposal had been put forward by Shirley, for the local regiments employed in the preceding year had now been disbanded, and it was highly doubtful whether the necessary forces could be raised again in so short a time as the five weeks named in the letter from

London. Nor did the numbers proposed appear adequate to invade Canada where, according to information, the French had some 40,000 fighting men independently of the Indian levies they could raise.

It is evident than an expedition of this importance could not be expected to escape attention in France. In spite of all precautions for secrecy its purpose was sure to become known. Interference must of necessity follow, since France could not tamely see her greatest colony wrested from her without an attempt on her part to save it. The duty of covering the expedition from such interference would clearly be one of the functions of the main squadron in home waters.

The Western Squadron was still under the command of Admiral Martin, who was again ordered into the Soundings in the beginning of February, when it became certain that the French had abandoned for the time their intention to invade the Kingdom. A portion of the squadron<sup>1</sup> was already at sea under Commodore Fox<sup>2</sup>, whose instructions, dated Feb. 3rd, were to cruise in such stations as he should think fit for the protection of trade, the destruction of the privateers "which very much infest the Soundings and entrance of the Channel," and the interception of the French homeward bound trade to Rochefort, Brest and Port l'Orient, besides looking out for the French and Spanish ships coming from Ferrol<sup>3</sup>.

Admiral Martin's instructions, which were dated February 11th, were similar to those given to Captain Fox, and ran as follows:—

"Whereas the ships named in the margin are ordered to cruise on such stations as shall be thought best for intercepting the privateers of the enemy as well as their trade homeward bound to the ports of Brest, Rochefort and l'Orient making Cape Clear once in every fourteen days, you are as soon as the 'Monmouth' and 'Falkland' are ready for the sea to proceed to join them, and when you do so to take them under your command and cruise on such stations as you shall judge best for the purposes afore-mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> The ships placed under Martin were 'Royal George,' 90, 'Prince George,' 90, 'Captain,' 70, 'Prince Frederick,' 70, 'Devonshire,' 80, 'Augusta,' 60, 'Lyon,' 60, 'Maidstone,' 50, 'Lizard' sloop. 'Monmouth,' 70, and 'Falkland,' 50, to join when ready. Orders and Instructions, 11 Feb., 1746.

<sup>2</sup> Fox had relieved Legge, who, it will be remembered, had been ordered to sea in January in consequence of a report that a Spanish squadron from Ferrol was going to Brest to join the French squadron. Legge was wanted in London for Mathews's court martial.

<sup>3</sup> Besides this squadron there were single ships cruising against the privateers. The year opened with a favourable omen in the capture of a French 50 gun ship, the 'Auguste,' by one of these, the 'Portland,' 50, Captain Steevens, on Feb. 9th. The engagement between these two frigates was a most stubborn one. The 'Auguste' showed no disinclination for the fight, but fought a dogged standstill action for two and a half hours, after which, with 54 killed and 94 wounded out of a complement of 470 men she surrendered. "My officers and men," wrote Steevens with pardonable pride, "behaved with the bravest gallantry, and were greatly rejoiced to have met so equal a force to try the strength of his Majesty's arms." The 'Portland's' losses were but five killed and 13 wounded.

"And we having received intelligence that a squadron of French and Spanish ships of war are intended to sail from Ferrol to Brest, you are, in case you shall receive certain advice of their being at sea, and that you cannot come up with them, to send a sloop or ship to the first port of England she can reach with an account of it by express and to draw with the ships under your command into the soundings, and near to the entrance of the Channel. But if you shall have good information that a superior force of ships is put to sea from Brest you are then to repair with the ships under your command off of Plymouth, and send in there for orders, and finding none, to proceed on to Spithead and remain there 'til further orders<sup>1</sup>."

Thus at this time the squadron was in no sense a blockading one. It was a cruising squadron for the defence of British trade and the interception of the larger French convoys. So far as the main forces of the enemy were concerned it was a squadron of observation only. The actual force at Brest at this time was uncertain; it was believed to consist of about 26 sail, of which three only were ready<sup>2</sup>, but intelligence from Oporto stated that nine sail of the line—five French and four Spaniards—were under orders to sail from Ferrol to join the Brest squadron<sup>3</sup>. This last information was however far from definite, and in view of the unreadiness at Brest it is clear that the Ministry determined that the main efforts of the western squadron should be directed for the present against the French trade.

Within less than a fortnight of Martin's appointment advice of the expected sailing of a French merchant fleet was received. Sixty sail of West India merchants were reported to be about to put out from Bordeaux, to be joined off Ile de Ré by another 100 sail, and thence proceed to the West Indies under escort of men of war. Martin was at once ordered to sail as soon as possible, pick up Fox's squadron in the Soundings and seek the French and destroy them<sup>4</sup>. Several of his ships however were not yet refitted after their winter cruising to the eastward, and it was not until March 2nd that he sailed with the 'Monmouth,' 'Falkland' and 'Lizard' only. He left orders for the still unready ships to join him, and proceeded to the S.W. of the Scillies to pick up Fox; but not finding him he stood down to a rendezvous 20 leagues S.W. from Scilly, sending the 'Tavistock' to find the other ships off Cape Clear. This she did, and Fox arrived with five ships on March 8th. With this squadron Martin stretched away to the southward and began cruising between Scilly and latitude 46°, or another half degree further south when the wind came easterly.

<sup>1</sup> Signed by Sandwich, A. Hamilton, V. Beauclerk, G. Anson.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Capt. Legge, H.M.S. 'Lizard,' Feb. 6th: information received from a Dutch ship out of Brest. S. P. Dom. Naval, 30.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Consul Parker, dated January 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>th, received January 27th. The ships were expected to sail "in a few days." This was confirmed from Lisbon in a letter of February 1<sup>0</sup>/<sub>5</sub>th, received February 17th. In letters, Secretary of State, 4116.

<sup>4</sup> Orders and Instructions, February 20th, 1746.

Fresh advices as to the movements of the enemy's trade or men-of-war soon began to reach the Admiralty, and produced fresh instructions for Martin. The original duties assigned to him on February 11th were concerned particularly with the protection of trade in the Soundings. Those of the 20th took him further south to attack enemy's trade sailing from the Ile de Ré. On March 5th he was told that four men-of-war and nine transports were expected to sail from the Charente to Martinique, and these he was to seek and endeavour to capture.

All plans for the attack upon the French commerce were however upset by news which made Brest the centre of attraction. On March 17th, intelligence was received in London that the Spanish squadron had sailed from Ferrol under sealed orders and had been seen off Finisterre standing to the northward. Brest, according to report, was its destination. Instructions were therefore at once sent to Martin to intercept it, and these had hardly left London when a report from a Dutch ship pointed to some important scheme being in contemplation at Brest. A squadron of eight sail of which five were ships of the line, together with 14 large merchant ships, were ready for sea, a train of artillery had been put on board and troops were in the neighbourhood preparing to embark. An embargo had been laid on all shipping, and the greatest pains were being taken to conceal the destination of the expedition, which was believed to be either England, Ireland or Cape Breton<sup>1</sup>. This news was confirmed from other sources within the next few days. Three more ships<sup>2</sup> were added to Martin's squadron at once, and he was ordered to collect all his ships, calling in those cruising independently if necessary, and go off Brest, as it was of the utmost consequence to stop the expedition. The Ministry appear to have had little doubt that its object was the recapture of Louisbourg<sup>3</sup>.

Thus within three weeks the scene had wholly changed, and the object of the Western Squadron was altered from a defence of the trade in the Soundings and an attack upon that issuing from the southern Biscay ports, to the protection of some outlying part of the British dominions, probably Louisbourg, against a military expedition sailing from one of the northern French ports. Martin's attention became centred on Brest. Rochelle and Rochefort were thereby left open, and in consequence a great French fleet of 250 sail of merchant ships with a weak escort of four men-of-war<sup>4</sup> under Conflans was able to get out of Aix Roads in security on April 18th. Thus, by keeping their enemy in apprehension of an attack the French most adequately protected their trade.

<sup>1</sup> In letters, Secretary of State, 4116, March 13th (n.s.), 1746.

<sup>2</sup> 'Defiance,' 60, 'Ruby,' 50, 'Salisbury,' 50.

<sup>3</sup> Orders and Instructions, March 19th, 22nd, 31st. Out letters, 1746.

<sup>4</sup> 'Neptune,' 58, 'Terrible,' 74, 'Alcyon,' 50, 'Gloire,' 46.

One squadron of the size of that under Martin's command could not possibly cover all the points and provide all the services involved in watching the French ports. Martin had just begun to work to the northward when Conflans was about to sail; in his previous station, about 100 leagues S.W. by S. from Scilly, he would have been in a fair way to intercept this great convoy, the loss of which to France would have been a severe blow.

A few days later—on April 21st—Martin found that only two of his ships<sup>1</sup> were still in a condition to keep the sea. Some of his squadron had been hurried out when still incomplete and had already been cruising for over two months. He was therefore obliged to bear away for Plymouth leaving Captain Mostyn with the two efficient ships, to which would be added any others that might be sent out from the home ports, with instructions to cruise from 6 to 25 leagues S.W. from Scilly, to observe Brest, watch the preparations making there, and bring instant information if the enemy should put to sea. Mostyn was ordered to cruise for ten days and then bring his own ship, which also needed water and refreshments, into Plymouth, leaving the next senior officer to cruise in those parts.

Martin anchored in Plymouth Sound on April 22nd with six ships<sup>2</sup>. The reinforcement which had been sent to join him, consisting of the 'Defiance,' 'Salisbury' and 'Ruby' under Captain Lord Harry Powlett, had left Plymouth on April 11th and stood down to Brest to find him. Powlett cruised here some days, and on the 16th chased and captured the French 40 gun frigate 'Embuscade' from which he learned, firstly, that no English ships had been seen from Brest lately; and secondly that the Duc d'Anville with 18 sail of men-of-war and 15 transports was lying in the harbour ready to sail. Expecting that Martin would be at the alternative rendezvous off Scilly, Powlett hurried thither with his news, but did not come across the main squadron; but on the 22nd he met a Dutch ship from Lisbon which reported having seen ten sail of English ships to the southward the day before. This had been Martin's squadron. Powlett sent his news about d'Anville to England by the 'Embuscade' and hastened back to reinforce—as he imagined<sup>3</sup>—Martin, whom he supposed still to be off Brest.

Martin, as we have seen, had only reached Plymouth on the 22nd; the 'Embuscade' arrived next day, and gave him the certain news that the French were still in harbour as late as the 15th. This information corroborated his previous intelligence; and at the same time he had

<sup>1</sup> 'Hampton Court' and 'Portland.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Yarmouth,' 'Monmouth,' 'Prince Frederick,' 'Captain,' 'Lyon' and 'Falkland.' The 'Devonshire' went to Portsmouth.

<sup>3</sup> Captain's letters. Lord H. Powlett, April 21st, 1746.

a report from two privateers<sup>1</sup> that seven sail of East Indiamen and two men-of-war, mounting from 70 to 30 guns, were in Port Louis ready to sail on about the same date.

The exact force in Brest was now said to be eight ships of the line, ten frigates large and small, 12 transports, two fireships and a hospital ship, carrying 2000 troops and commanded by the Duc d'Anville and M. d'Estournelles. They were to go, it was said, to Port Louis to meet ten more sail that had arrived there from Ferrol, and for whom provisions were lying ready for immediate embarkation; when joined the whole fleet would sail, probably for Cape Breton<sup>2</sup>.

The Admiralty in the meantime had received news that a large fleet had been seen to sail from Brest on April 19th. When therefore on the 23rd they learned that Martin had had to return to harbour, they were in grave fears both for the ships which had been sent out to reinforce him, which might now fall into the hands of this superior force, and for Cape Breton where Townsend's squadron was vastly inferior to that coming out under d'Anville. If the West Indies were the destination of the French, the case was even worse, for except Jamaica there was no harbour in which the local squadron could shelter in full security, and no garrisons which could hold the islands against the forces by which they were threatened. The outlying ships, however, were soon known to be safe; urgent orders<sup>3</sup> were sent to Martin to get as many ships as possible to sea again, leaving the others to follow as they were made ready; above all it was impressed upon him that not one moment was to be lost, as it was of the utmost consequence to prevent that expedition from getting away. If when he got off Brest he should find that the French had already gone, he was to inform the Admiralty with the least delay, and also to detach a clean ship to Louisbourg to warn Admiral Warren. Orders were given to send three ships<sup>4</sup> from Portsmouth to join his squadron. The 'Augusta' and 'Maidstone' that were in refit were to be made ready, and these, together with the five ships<sup>5</sup> available and his flagship, would make up a squadron of 13 sail which could deal with the Brest squadron. Martin replied<sup>6</sup> that he would sail as soon as he could, but he greatly feared that the French were already out of reach. He watered his ships, landed his sick, and having obtained

<sup>1</sup> The 'Duke of Bedford' and 'Earl of Sandwich.'

<sup>2</sup> Though Cape Breton was throughout this time looked upon as the most probable objective, it was by no means certain that Scotland and Ireland might not be the real destination.

<sup>3</sup> Instructions of April 25th, 1746.

<sup>4</sup> 'Duke,' 'Prince George' and 'Princess Louisa.'

<sup>5</sup> 'Hampton Court' and 'Portland' which Martin had left off Brest and the three reinforcing ships 'Defiance,' 'Ruby' and 'Salisbury.'

<sup>6</sup> April 27th.



such refreshment as was possible, he got to sea again on May 2nd, though with five ships<sup>1</sup> only. He was joined outside Plymouth by three more<sup>2</sup> from Portsmouth, and as he worked down channel he picked up the 'Hampton Court,' giving him a squadron of eight heavy ships. But he failed to meet the 'Defiance,' 'Portland,' 'Ruby' and 'Salisbury' which the Admiralty had counted upon to make up his squadron to the strength of the enemy.

South-westerly winds so delayed his passage that he did not get off Ushant till the 9th May. He had received a piece of intelligence the day before which gave him a ray of hope that the French might not yet have got away into the Atlantic, a Danish ship having seen 40 sail three days earlier standing for St Martin's; in which case, if he could be sure that d'Anville was not in Brest, he might be able to intercept him off Rochefort. So soon therefore as he was close off Brest, he sent his cutter, the 'Tavistock,' into Broad Sound to find out what she could. She rejoined him on the 13th with the news that she had been right into Brest water and had a fair view of the whole harbour. It was empty except for three ships and a few small frigates or privateers. D'Anville had gone.

Martin at once called a council of war<sup>3</sup>, which unanimously agreed that as the French had probably gone to Port Louis or the Ile de Groix "we ought to proceed thither with all the force we now have together to gain what intelligence we can concerning them, and endeavour to prevent their designs: and not meeting them there, to proceed as far as Belleisle: and that the 'Maidstone's' prize<sup>4</sup> be sent away immediately to Louisbourg as the detaching a ship of the line may prove of ill-consequence, the strength of the enemy being uncertain." The prize was at once provisioned, 50 men were put on board her, and she sailed to warn Warren and the Governor of Louisbourg. At the same time the 'Tavistock' was sent to the first port she could reach in England to inform the Admiralty. Having made these arrangements, Martin bore away with the squadron under all the canvas he could carry, and his ships were cleared and kept in constant readiness for action<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 'Yarmouth,' 'Captain,' 'Augusta,' 'Lyon,' 'Falkland.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Princess Louisa,' 'Duke,' 'Prince George.'

<sup>3</sup> The council was of senior captains only: Boscawen, Brett, Fox, Charles Watson, Roger Martin, Barradell and Bentley.

<sup>4</sup> A small vessel taken a few days before by the 'Maidstone.'

<sup>5</sup> The following instruction was given by him to his captains. "In case of coming to an engagement with the enemy, if they should have the wind of us, to keep a barge manned and armed on the off-side from them to be ready to assist any ship that may be attempted by the enemy's fire ships." This is the first form of this order, which subsequently found its way into the Additional Instructions. Journal of Admiral Martin.

The 'Maidstone's' prize arrived at Louisbourg on July 5th, and brought the first hint that the expedition against Quebec might be interfered with. Ships were sent to search along the coast and keep a careful look out for the French if they should arrive, but the preparations for the invasion of Canada were in no way relaxed.

The detachment of the 'Tavistock' to England left Martin with but one small ship for scouting duties. When he left England he had two cutters, the 'Tavistock' and 'Rochester.' The capture of the privateer (renamed the 'Maidstone's' prize) had furnished him with a ship he could send to Louisbourg; but now, at a moment when information was of the most supreme importance to him if he were to be able to bring the enemy to action, he had the 'Rochester' alone to find out the strength, the whereabouts and the destination of the French forces in the Atlantic. He wrote at this time pointing out his crying need for small frigates.

Martin's new rendezvous, given on May 14th to his captains, was "West six or seven leagues from Belleisle; and not finding us there in four days, the former station off Ushant<sup>1</sup>." He got down off Ile de Groix in thick weather with light airs. For four days a fog continued in which the squadron could only be kept together by firing guns, but, though the ships saw nothing of each other, none became separated. On the 19th the fog lifted with every sign of an impending S.W. gale. The 'Rochester,' which had been to Belleisle, rejoined with the news that she had been close in, but that there were no ships there. The Admiral therefore, in accordance with his plans, made sail for Rochefort, bad though the conditions of the weather were for cruising in that part. That same afternoon he got new intelligence. The 'Augusta,' Captain Knight, closed the flag and reported that he had just boarded a vessel three days out from Bordeaux, from whose master he had learned that on the day he left there were at anchor off Rochefort ten sail of Spanish men-of-war and several French, together with a great fleet of transports. This solved the question of the whereabouts of the enemy; but it also showed them to be in far greater strength than had been expected. Martin therefore called a council to consider the situation. The Brest squadron and the transports had evidently got into Rochefort, and the Spaniards were probably the Ferrol squadron, of whom there had been so many reports earlier in the year. The report of the master of the ship said he "was so close in that he could count the Spanish ships by their colours, but there were so many with French colours that he could not be certain of the number of ships of war<sup>1</sup>"; the report was so clear that the council was satisfied of its truth. "Having consulted

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Admiral Martin.

and advised with them," wrote Martin, "and compared the several intelligences together, from which there was great reason to believe that the Brest squadron with the transports were gone down into the Bay, no ships being under Belleisle, and between Port Louis and the Ile de Groix being represented as a place improper to make up a large number<sup>1</sup>, it was our unanimous opinion that remaining longer here for an opportunity to look into those places was time lost and that it was most for his Majesty's service to proceed with the squadron immediately to the station west of Ushant to meet such other ships as might be sent out to join the squadron, or any further instructions, and to despatch a clean ship to the first port she could fetch in England with an account of it<sup>2</sup>."

There was no reasonable doubt in the minds of the council that the enemy were in vastly superior strength. The Brest squadron had been reported from several sources to consist of eight of the line and four frigates; the Rochefort squadron was apparently four of the line; and now ten sail of Spanish ships were said to have joined the French at Rochefort, making 22 sail of large ships in all. Martin had nine of the line and three 50 gun ships with him; presuming therefore the information were correct the decision to fall back to Ushant and await reinforcements will appear no more than prudent<sup>3</sup>.

Martin now took up a station approximately N.W. from Ushant, from 20 to 70 miles distant<sup>4</sup>, in order to meet the ships that he expected would be sent to strengthen his squadron. The first reinforcement joined on the 22nd—three ships<sup>5</sup> under Captain Powlett—and brought him further news of the position at Rochefort. The master of a Portuguese brigantine which had sailed from that port on May 5th had informed Powlett that 14 sail of French men-of-war and nearly 100 sail of transports had arrived on May 2nd, and that a Spanish squadron

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* no anchorages where a large fleet could be assembled. It must be recollected that the British ships had no accurate charts of the coasts.

<sup>2</sup> Journal of Admiral Martin.

<sup>3</sup> The officers who formed this council were Piercy Brett, Boscawen, Charles Watson, Fox and Roger Martin.

<sup>4</sup> Examples of his noon positions.

May 22nd	Ushant	S. 66 E. 70 miles
" 23rd	"	S. 67 E. 29 "
" 24th	"	S. 70 E. 58 "
" 25th	"	S. 60 E. 39 "
" 26th	"	S. 60 E. 31 "
" 27th	"	S. 68 E. 21 "
" 28th	"	S. 36 E. 51 "
" 29th	"	S. 52 E. 21 "

and so on till June 5th.

<sup>5</sup> 'Defiance,' 'Portland' and 'Ruby.'

had been daily expected; also that on the night of the 4th, 12 large and several small vessels had gone into harbour. This was confirmatory of his previous intelligence.

Next day Martin was reinforced by some more ships<sup>1</sup> under Captain Harrison, whose joining him was a matter of accident. Some weeks previously the 'Rochester' cutter had sighted five large ships and one small vessel off Scilly and had carried the news to the Admiralty, who, believing them to be a French squadron, had sent out Harrison to deal with them. An examination by Martin by Powlett's journal elucidated the fact that the six ships were not French, but were the three under Powlett and three more under Saumarez<sup>2</sup> which had been together off Scilly on the day the 'Rochester' reported having seen this force. In these circumstances the Admiral had no hesitation in ordering Harrison to come under his command, as the latter's instructions were obviously based on a misapprehension. It will readily be seen that the result of the faulty intelligence given by the 'Rochester' might have been serious; but as matters turned out it provided Martin with a reinforcement which he would not otherwise have had.

More definite intelligence, still further corroborating the previous reports, reached him at noon next day (May 24th). A Dutch galleot that ran into the squadron reported that she had seen a great fleet of men-of-war in Rochefort with their topsails sheeted home and to all appearance about to sail, and that it was common report that they were to sail on the 20th for Ireland, for which purpose a great number of soldiers had been embarked. From this information it appeared that the French might already be at sea. Foul winds might however have detained them, and Martin considered the question of making an attack upon them while they were still at Rochefort. The idea had been discussed before and rejected, but the value of such a service would be so great that he brought the proposal up again. The pilot however reported it as wholly impracticable "informing me," says Martin in his journal, "there was no going in with the squadron, though they met no opposition, unless each ship had a pilot, and if there was any firing he would not take charge of the ship as the smoke would blind the marks and there was no going in with the lead." This, added to yet another confirming report that the Spaniards had joined the French at Rochefort<sup>3</sup>, decided the Admiral not to make an attempt upon the harbour. His squadron however was now approximately equal to the

<sup>1</sup> 'Monmouth,' 'Advice,' 'Windsor,' 'Mermaid,' 'Chesterfield,' 'Lizard' sloop.

<sup>2</sup> 'Nottingham,' 'Sunderland' and 'Falcon' sloop.

<sup>3</sup> This he received on the evening of May 24th from some English masters who were taking passage to England on board some Dutch ships from Bordeaux and had seen the enemy's fleet. Journal of Admiral Martin.

reported strength of the enemy—19 ships to their 22 or thereabouts—and there was thus no reason to avoid the chance of engaging them at sea. But the difficulty was to determine where to intercept them. The reports as to their destination were various, and it now appeared to be as likely that they were going to Ireland as to Cape Breton. As a close blockade of Rochefort was not at that time considered a practicable undertaking, he could not ensure meeting the enemy at the one certain place, the point of departure. If the French were going to Cape Breton his best station would be off Finisterre; but if they were going to Ireland—and to this view he seems to have inclined—he said they would have to stretch out to the westward a long way before they could make that island in which case following them would leave the Channel unguarded; while, if he were off Finisterre, he would probably miss them as they would not come so far south. Unable to cover both the Kingdom and Cape Breton, he fell back upon the old formula that as the defence of England was the primary consideration his proper station was in the Soundings until he should receive some fresh intelligence or instructions.

On the 27th a packet from Lisbon was boarded who gave the news that an important homeward bound British convoy of 120 sail, under the care of the 'York' and 'Folkestone,' had been due to sail from the Tagus on the 18th. Trade must always be defended and Martin at once started to work to the westward for their better security, but strong gales prevented him from making much westing. However on the 29th he fell in with a ship which had parted company from the convoy and gathered from her that the bulk was well to windward and had been unmolested, so that his anxiety was removed. The weather however was so bad that he was obliged to keep to the westward, for his 90 gun ships drifting badly to leeward and making it dangerous, particularly in the very thick weather, to close in on Ushant.

In the meanwhile his letter of May 19th, reporting that the French had sailed from Brest, had reached the Admiralty on the 28th May. This news they had already heard by advices from Rochefort, which however contained no reference to the Spanish squadron. The Board ordered three more ships<sup>1</sup> to join Martin, and told him at once to go wherever the enemy might be. If the enemy had left the Bay he was to return to Plymouth for instructions, but if they had sailed towards Ireland or any other portion of the Kingdom he was to follow them<sup>2</sup>. Whether the Admiralty discounted Martin's information as to the Spanish squadron in Rochefort does not appear in any of the papers.

<sup>1</sup> 'St George,' 90, 'Prince Frederick,' 70, 'Elizabeth,' 70.

<sup>2</sup> Instructions of May 29th, 1746. Out letters.

In his letter of the 19th he had mentioned the report that ships from Ferrol had joined the French, but he had not then such detailed intelligence as he had received later. Next day—the 29th—the Admiralty received more definite information overland from Rochefort, in which it was stated that the French were still at that port in “no great strength.” Fresh instructions, conveying this news to Martin, were at once despatched. In these he was told to go immediately to Rochefort and destroy the enemy if they were not yet sailed, but if they were, to pursue them as long as he thought he had any “reasonable expectation” of overhauling them, returning to a station off Cape Clear when he found he could not do so. If they had sailed for England he was to come home, as directed in his previous instructions. But besides the possibility that the French might have gone west or north, there was the further consideration that they might have gone south. The Mediterranean squadron was now on its way to Cadiz, and if the French went that way it might be crushed. Martin was therefore ordered to warn Medley that the enemy was at sea, and to reinforce him off Cadiz if the enemy went that way.

How great was the bewilderment caused by lack of information is evident. Until definite news of the enemy’s course should be received the safety of the Kingdom demanded that Martin’s squadron should not leave home waters. It must cruise in the mouth of the Channel or to the westward until there was a certainty that no attack on Ireland or Scotland was in progress; in the meantime our valuable possessions in the West Indies and our important acquisition, Cape Breton, were exposed to the assaults of a fleet and army which would have got away with a very long start.

On the 30th, the day after the last instructions had been sent by the Admiralty, the Duke of Newcastle began issuing instructions of his own. He wrote to the Admiralty, and said that Martin was to be told that if he received certain information of the sailing of the French squadron from Rochefort for the Mediterranean he was to follow them thither with such a number of ships as he thought sufficient, and send the remainder to Plymouth. To this the Admiralty took strong exception and sending the Duke a copy of the instructions they had already despatched, replied that if his plan were adopted “the nation will be left too much exposed by being deprived of that squadron for a guard at home, in case he should be deceived or mistaken in his opinion which, from the nature of sea intelligence, may very probably happen.” Everything indeed hinged on information, and the extreme difficulty of obtaining “certain” information. The Admiralty believed that no intelligence that Martin could get could warrant the risk of a

chase to the Mediterranean and the exposure of our coasts to the danger of invasion<sup>1</sup>. The Duke thereupon withdrew his order.

On June 9th the orders of the 28th and 29th May reached Martin, cruising to the westward. He at once stood away for Oléron off which he arrived on the 16th. Here he was joined by the 'Mercury' on the 17th with the bad news that the French had sailed from Rochefort six days before. D'Anville had indeed got away clear on the 11th June with a squadron of nine ships of the line, two 50 gun ships and three frigates, together with a fleet of about 60 sail of transports carrying 3500 troops. Without reconnaissance or scouting of any kind, without any knowledge of the British forces that might be in the Bay, he sailed with this great armament into an uncommanded sea. Such boldness, if indeed it were not temerity, deserved castigation, and had the British naval force been differently disposed, must have received it. Had a strong squadron been kept to the westward with a sufficiency of frigates watching the ports of western France, the risk of the French escaping in this manner would have been reduced to a minimum. How greatly inaccurate information contributed to their escape is obvious. Dependent on reports from trading vessels, Martin and his captains over-estimated the strength of the French; with his 11 ships he could not attempt to blockade the force of about 20 which the French had apparently assembled at Rochefort. Kempenfelt's bold action of December 12th 1781, may be compared with Martin's; but Kempenfelt had 12 of the line against 19 of de Guichen and it would be unjust to say that Martin, against even greater odds, should have taken such a supreme risk as was taken by that brilliant officer. It is also to be borne in mind that there was no force behind Martin as there was behind Kempenfelt, and that the destruction of his squadron might have meant the invasion of the Kingdom.

Martin was now at least six days behind the enemy, as to whose objective point he still had no certainty. Despatching the 'Chesterfield' with an express to the Admiralty to inform them of the escape of the French, he hastened to get out of the bay as quickly as he could with the great ships to avoid the dangers incident to becoming embayed in those parts with westerly winds, intending afterwards to execute that part of his instructions of the 29th May which directed him to take up a station off Cape Clear, if he saw no reasonable chance of coming up with the enemy. He was still to the southward of Oléron on the 19th when from a Jersey privateer he got a hint of the enemy's objective. This craft some 23 days earlier had taken a ship with a cargo of

<sup>1</sup> See Norris's views on the same subject in 1744 when a very similar order was sent him by the Duke of Newcastle, vol. II. chap. III. p. 67.

soldiers clothing for Quebec on her way from Bayonne to join the convoy at Rochefort; but the clue was, in Martin's opinion, insufficient to warrant a chase to America or leaving Medley to shift for himself. He therefore continued to work to the westward, and detached Keppel in the 'Amazon' with the 'Maidstone' in company to stretch along the Spanish coast to get news of the enemy, with instructions that "if he got certain advice that they were gone to the Mediterranean, immediately to despatch the 'Amazon' to Vice-Admiral Medley off Cadiz to inform him of all particulars he knew relating to them, and himself to make the best of his way to me in the rendezvous off Cape Clear<sup>1</sup>."

For over a week Martin beat to the westward against such severe gales of wind, rain and fog that the squadron, frequently lying to under courses, was reduced to 18 ships<sup>2</sup>. As the days passed and he neither saw nor heard anything of the enemy his anxiety for the Kingdom increased, and on the 30th June he detached two cruisers to Kinsale for information. None came, and when he made Cape Clear on July 3rd and sent the 'Swan' cutter into Baltimore for news, she returned to tell him that no ships of war had been reported in the Channel.

Martin could now feel that no attack upon the Kingdom was contemplated; the balance of evidence now pointed to America as the enemy's destination and there could be no object in his ruining the squadron by keeping it at sea off Cape Clear, especially as the ships were getting sickly and short of provisions. He therefore called a council of war and the unanimous decision was that "by reason of the want of beer, shortness of water and provisions, and sickness of the ships' companies who are falling down daily, the squadron is not in a condition to remain out any longer<sup>3</sup>"; but that six ships and two frigates should be left off Cape Clear to cruise to the westward, and the remainder return to Plymouth without loss of time. Captain Boscawen was therefore left with the ships latest from harbour<sup>4</sup>, with instructions to cruise in the Soundings, stretching as far as Cape Ortegale, so long as his provisions would last. Martin with the remainder of the squadron<sup>5</sup> returned to Plymouth where he anchored on the 6th July.

Here the Admiral found instructions the purport of which he had

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Admiral Martin, June 19th, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> 'St George,' 'Portland,' 'Defiance' and 'Salisbury' were missing having parted company.

<sup>3</sup> Journal of Admiral Martin. Also in letters.

<sup>4</sup> 'Namur,' 74, 'Monmouth,' 70, 'Prince Frederick,' 70, 'Hampton Court,' 70, 'Windsor,' 60, 'Advice,' 50, 'Mermaid,' 44, 'Mercury,' 20.

<sup>5</sup> 'Duke,' 90, 'St George,' 90, 'Prince George,' 90, 'Yarmouth,' 70, 'Captain,' 70, 'Princess Louisa,' 60, 'Ruby,' 50, 'Defiance,' 60, 'Lyon,' 60, 'Augusta,' 60, 'Swan,' sloop, 'Aetna' and 'Scipio' fireships. The 'Salisbury' and 'Portland' had lost company with the squadron in a fog on June 30th.



anticipated in detaching Boscawen. Dated the 3rd July—the day the council of war sat off Cape Clear—they directed Martin to detach Boscawen with nearly the identical ships to cruise for a San Domingo fleet, which was expected under escort of three men-of-war; he was also told that a British East India fleet had arrived in Galway and that a ship was to be detached to bring them up Channel—information which reached Boscawen from another source, and on which he acted.

Martin had now served with but little interruption or relaxation since May 1738, when he had gone out at three days notice to the Mediterranean to join Haddock and his health had suffered greatly. He had indeed wished to be relieved in the spring when the danger of invasion was over; but finding that his services could not be spared he had consented to remain in command, though, as he told Anson, it would be essential, if he were not to be crippled for life that he should take a spell ashore in the autumn<sup>1</sup>. He now formally requested leave to strike his flag and recover his health. There is no record in the official correspondence that the Admiralty laid any blame upon him<sup>2</sup>, but it may be that the Admiral felt himself insufficiently supported by the Administration in regard to the attacks made upon him by the gossips and city men, who abused him<sup>3</sup>. Such abuse was however the common portion of naval commanders, who were the perpetual targets either of the merchants, when their trade suffered, or of the ministers, when their inadequate measures had produced confusion or disaster.

Martin's request was approved. On July 9th he struck his flag after a strenuous sixteen months' command, in which his lack of success in stopping the enemy's sea-traffic, whether military or commercial, was due rather to the constitution and disposition of his squadron by the Administration, to lack of good intelligence and of the means of procuring it, than to any shortcomings in the execution of his orders.

<sup>1</sup> Martin to Anson, February 3rd, 1746. Anson Correspondence, B.M. Add. MS. 15957, f. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Nor have I found any in the more important private correspondences of the Duke of Newcastle, Duke of Bedford, Lord Sandwich, Lord Anson or Lord Hardwicke.

<sup>3</sup> J. le Keux to Admiral Medley, July 2nd, 1746, *Lady du Cane's Papers*, p. 130. Charnock says "Thinking himself in some measure ill-treated by those who were then entrusted with the administration of public affairs, he requested leave to retire."

## CHAPTER II

### CAPE BRETON, L'ORIENT AND WESTERN SQUADRON (2)

THE strength and disposition of the Western Squadron, and also of its disposition, had been the subject of some discussion at the Admiralty within the preceding month. The failure to intercept d'Anville, the numerous occasions during this year and the year before, on which French merchant fleets had sailed outward and homeward unmolested, showed that something was wrong in our policy. From a defensive point of view our oversea possessions in Acadia and the West Indies were insufficiently covered; nor were we able to exercise any serious pressure upon France so long as she could conduct her commerce with such comparative immunity. Her manufactures could still find her markets, raw materials could still reach her workshops and money was therefore available to pay the prodigious army with which she was dominating Western Europe. If the war were to be brought to an end a more effectual manner of employing our maritime force was necessary<sup>1</sup>.

The standing squadron under Martin had consisted of about ten ships. The system had been to reinforce this upon occasion, by order from the Admiralty, with the other small squadrons or single cruising ships which were not normally under his command. There were ships in the Channel's mouth, others off Cape Clear and the Bristol Channel all cruising separately, principally against the privateers. But the main squadron, Martin's, was not strong enough to deal with the main enemies' forces in the Atlantic. It could not be kept cruising in continual superiority to the squadrons the enemy could send out if they collected all their forces together; the alternative of dividing the squadron in order to watch both Brest and Rochefort had been discussed by the Admirals and Captains during the preceding summer, and good reasons had been adduced against doing so. When attention had to be paid to one of these ports, the other had perforce to be left

<sup>1</sup> The importance of commerce, as a source of power in war, is often referred to by contemporary writers. "These advantages [of increase of trade] gained by the French are conspicuous from the immense sum which they draw annually from other countries, and which enable them to maintain powerful armies, and afford such plentiful subsidies and pensions to several Powers and people in Europe. From hence they build their ships of war and maintain seamen to supply them." *Two letters concerning some further advantages and improvements that may seem necessary to be made on the taking and keeping of Cape Breton.* London, 1746.

open. The enemy therefore had but to make preparations in Brest if he wished to draw the squadron away from Rochelle to allow a merchant fleet to sail.

The whole problem was now brought up at the Admiralty by Anson. On July 9th Martin received permission to strike his flag. Anson was nominated as his successor, and he at once raised the question of the policy of the employment of the squadron he was to command<sup>1</sup>. He seems to have written to the Duke of Bedford and Lord Sandwich, the two principal Commissioners, expressing his view that the western squadron should be as strong a body as possible, able to deal with whatever strength the enemy might send to sea at any time.

The two Commissioners differed in their views. Their opinions will be given in their own words. The Duke of Bedford wrote:

"I entirely agree with you in what you said to his Majesty on that subject. You know my opinion has long been that we ought to unite all the ships cruising to the westward, whether in the Bay or off the Isle of Batz and St Maloes, or off Cape Clear, into one squadron: and I am the more strongly confirmed in that opinion at present, because by the sending away so great a force to America as is now designed to be put under the command of Admiral Lestock<sup>2</sup> we are incapacitated from dividing our force to the westward, which, when collected together is not more than sufficient to withstand the Brest or Rochefort fleets, if united with that of Ferrol. I am moreover confident that these are the sentiments of his Majesty, as well as of the Ministers, who, I think, very justly agree that no little *agreements* of making prizes on the enemy ought in any measure to be put in competition with the keeping an ascendancy over them in the Channel<sup>3</sup>."

Lord Sandwich was for the policy of dividing the forces. His letter, in rather greater detail than that of the Duke of Bedford, furnishes a complete exposition of the reasoning which supported that policy.

"You desire my opinion," he wrote, "with relation to the recalling the ships that are now out to refit and recruit<sup>4</sup>. I must own that till I hear of the arrival of the San Domingo fleet I shall not be entirely easy without we have a sufficient force cruising to intercept them: nor do I think the time that it will be necessary for Mr Boscawen to remain on that service so great that it can in any material degree delay the refitting the ships, as he will probably not be able to keep the sea much longer than till the ships now in hand are despatched. I think, indeed (if it was practicable for our orders to take place, which I greatly doubt) it might be a prudent measure for Mr Boscawen to send Lord George Graham with the 'Nottingham,' 'Eagle,' 'Maidstone' and two or three of the cleanest of his squadron on this service, and return with the remainder himself to Spithead; but, as I have

<sup>1</sup> I have not found the date of Anson's original letter, but it must have been later than July 3rd, since Boscawen's instructions, referred to in Sandwich's reply dated July 20th, are of that date. It is earlier than the 18th which is the date of Bedford's reply. Martin's application to haul down his flag was dated July 6th.

<sup>2</sup> Lestock's squadron was to have been the escorting force for Sinclair's expedition. It had been made up to eight sail in consequence of d'Anville's escape.

<sup>3</sup> Duke of Bedford to Admiral Anson, July 18th, 1746. Anson Correspondence, B.M. Add. MS. 15955.

<sup>4</sup> *I.e.* the order to make up one strong squadron of clean ships.

already said, I think the intercepting the San Domingo fleet too great an object not to be very seriously attended to, as I can never think there is any danger of an insult in our channel, notwithstanding the present division of our force. There are at least eleven ships of the line ready for immediate service, exclusive of four 90 gun ships, which might be manned out of the frigates upon any alarm. Other things will be dropping in every day; the 'Sunderland' and 'Falkland' particularly may be expected every hour; and as this strength is in reality a force of eighteen or twenty sail of ships, and the enemy must see it greater, as they cannot know the direct condition of some of our ships, which, though we reckon nothing, must appear to them in a different light (I mean such as the 'Royal Sovereign,' 'Sandwich,' 'Princess Royal'), I cannot conceive the enemy will ever think of an attempt in this part of the world, or that it can be dangerous to leave some ships out to perform this important service, particularly as it must, in my opinion, be over, one way or another, in ten days or a fortnight; and by immediately recalling them, we shall fall into the same trap which has, during the whole war, been so successfully laid for us, of giving way to every sudden alarm, and by that means have missed every advantage fortune would have thrown in our way....But I am so little positive or confident of my own judgement, that if on considering this matter more fully you and the Duke of Bedford are of different sentiment, and think it will be right to recall our force from the westward immediately, I shall have no difficulty to give up my opinion to those who I am sure must know much better than myself: and I shall never intimate to any person whatever that I was of another sentiment, because I think every act of this consequence one way or other ought to be the act of the whole, and you may be assured however you determine, it will have all the support I am able to give<sup>1</sup>."

These letters are of singular interest. They represent the antithetic views of two schools of thought. Both aim at the same end—the destruction of the enemy's trade and the protection of our own; but the Bedford view is wider, and attempts to dominate not only the trade but the whole maritime communication of the enemy. In the method advocated by Bedford and Anson the whole of the sea forces are collected into one body capable of dealing with any fleet, squadron or convoy put to sea by the enemy, from which body the Commander-in-Chief can make offshoots according to such information as he may receive. In Sandwich's method the fleet is broken up into squadrons, each with a particular object assigned by the Admiralty. If the enemy should come out in unexpected strength none of these units would be strong enough to deal with him, and before all could be collected together at some prearranged rendezvous the favourable moment would have passed. Much of Lord Sandwich's very shrewd reasoning was correct; it contains lessons of perennial truth. But even if the capture of the San Domingo convoy were the only object in view his direct method of attack was open to failure, since the enemy, in accordance with the custom followed by ourselves, might reinforce the convoy from Rochefort or Ferrol when it reached the danger area of the Bay; moreover the convoy might not arrive at the time it was expected. In the former of these eventualities a squadron like Boscawen's would be too weak;

<sup>1</sup> Lord Sandwich to Anson, July 20th, 1746. B.M. Add. MS. 15957.

in the latter, time would defeat the attempt. Exhausted by sea cruising, without organised reliefs, his ships might often be obliged to return to harbour before the critical moment arrived. Only a strong force adequately served by reliefs, and commanded by a man with ample powers of disposing his ships according to the fluctuating demands of the situation, could ensure that if the enemy came within reach he would be dealt with decisively.

Sandwich, in fact, misses the point. He assumes that the only reason for concentration is the defensive one of preventing an incursion into the Channel. This was not what was aimed at by Anson and Bedford, or by their predecessors Norris and Vernon, and their successors of later times. The system which Sandwich favoured was responsible for the escape of d'Anville and the immunity enjoyed by the French trade in 1746.

The importance of d'Anville's escape could not be disguised. Its first effect was that the Quebec expedition had to be stopped. By the middle of May the troops had been assembled at Portsmouth and the transports at Spithead, ready victualled and watered for the voyage. St Clair had received his instructions and everything was made ready for an immediate departure. In these instructions, dated May 14th, the General was directed to proceed with his army to Louisbourg and make the capture of Quebec his first object. Having taken that fortress he was to secure himself there and make the necessary preparations for the reduction of Canada. But if on his arrival he should find that the French had retaken Louisbourg he was to endeavour to relieve or recapture it. If beaten off in the attempt, he was to withdraw to Boston and consider what next to do. A clause in the instructions referred to the necessity of a good understanding between the land and sea-officers, and both Commanders-in-Chief were strictly enjoined to cultivate and maintain this; the soldiers to man the ships when required, the seamen to assist the land forces when occasions arose and provided their services could be spared for the purpose<sup>1</sup>.

The transports and the escorting squadron—five ships under Commodore Cotes—arrived at Spithead and the troops were embarked at St Helen's early in June. All was ready to sail, when the difficulties which had attended the sailing of every large body of ships from Spithead were once more experienced. Strong S.W. gales detained the expedition. St Clair began to get uneasy. On the 15th June he wrote to the Duke of Newcastle expressing his anxiety, which was shared by

<sup>1</sup> Anticipating Pitt's instructions of 1758, in which the same provision was made. Cf. Basil Williams, *Life of William Pitt*, vol. 1. p. 368.

Anson, lest the expedition should arrive too late. The end of July was the latest at which the St Lawrence should be reached, and it was becoming a matter of days whether this could be done. Two days later the wind came fair and the fleet got under sail, but only for an hour or two; then a calm dropped down, and the ships had again to come to an anchor. Eight days more passed in which the wind still held foul or calm, and then came the news from Martin<sup>1</sup> that d'Anville had sailed from Rochefort and might now be on his way to Louisbourg. D'Anville's squadron was far superior to that of Cotes, and it was clearly undesirable to allow the expedition to sail till its escort had been strengthened; but at the same time, as it was still uncertain whether the Rochefort squadron was bound, it was not considered possible, consistent with the safety of the Kingdom, to detach more ships across the Atlantic. St Clair was therefore directed to remain at Spithead and disembark his troops<sup>2</sup>.

Three weeks went by, invaluable time if anything were to be done in America that year. Martin returned to Plymouth on the 6th July; nothing further had been heard from the detached squadron he had left out under Boscawen. At length, when on the 17th it was decided the French must have gone to the westward, four ships were added to the convoy and the whole placed under the command of Admiral Lestock, who had recently been acquitted of the charges of misconduct brought against him by Mathews.

The expedition was ordered to sail as soon as possible<sup>3</sup>. The French were to be followed wherever they were gone and to be attacked. The naval forces of the rival expeditions were approximately equal, but when the ships from the Leeward Islands under Townsend<sup>4</sup> should have joined Lestock, the British would be considerably superior to the French. Having destroyed their sea forces, the expedition was to relieve or recapture the invested places, and as it would then be too late in the year to effect anything against Canada, St Clair's principal object was for the present to be the security of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The attempt on Quebec was to be postponed till the following spring. As for Louisbourg it was expected that the place could hold out even if d'Anville should attack it; and in preparation for the spring campaign it was suggested that the land route should be opened by seizing Crown Point at the head of Lake Champlain. If however it should turn out

<sup>1</sup> His letter of June 17th received by the Duke of Newcastle on June 25th.

<sup>2</sup> Duke of Newcastle to General St Clair, June 25th. S.P. Dom.

<sup>3</sup> The whole convoy now consisted of eight ships of the line, three 44 gun frigates and some sloops.

<sup>4</sup> Three ships of the line, three gun ships and four 40 gun ships, besides some small craft.

that d'Anville had gone to the West Indies to attack Jamaica, the question of following him was left to the judgment of the commanders. A similar discretion was given them as to where they would winter—Boston or New York—if they should find that the supplies necessary for so large a force were not available at Louisbourg.

Notwithstanding the directions contained in these orders, dated 17th July, to sail at once, the fleet could not get away. Foul winds kept it at Spithead, and as it lay there constant replenishment of the stores was necessary; for the men were consuming the victuals, beer and water, and this by itself proved a serious tax on the local resources. A fair N.N.E. breeze set in on July 31, but the ships were not yet all replenished. Next day the fleet got under sail and began its passage down Channel, but a week later found it once more at anchor in Sandown Roads, driven thither by strong N.N.W. and N.W. winds, and Lestock writing, as Norris before him had written, that he could not carry this great fleet down Channel without a leading wind.

By the middle of August, the uneasiness which the Ministry had felt in June as to the possibility of doing anything in America this year, was changed for an anxiety caused by the growing and loudly expressed discontent in the country at the unemployment of this large body of men, and at the expense of the fleet of transports, which had lain inactive from May to July. A suggestion, made by St Clair in the middle of June, apparently without serious reflection, furnished the Duke of Newcastle with an idea for an employment of this force which should give some countenance to his conduct of the year's campaign. His proposal was that the troops should be used to make a diversion upon the French coast. It was not however until late in August that it was adopted. On the 22nd of that month the Duke wrote to the joint commanders, saying that it was now so late in the year that the troops, if they were sent, could only spend the winter in Boston doing nothing, and that it might be possible to employ them instead in home waters by landing them on the French coast<sup>1</sup>; which might, he said, in his most airy generalising manner "greatly annoy the French, give assistance and protection to any of the French Protestants in Brittany who

<sup>1</sup> "The Duke of Bedford and all of us agreeing in opinion that St Clair would be able to do nothing this winter in North America, as Admiral Lestock and he had agreed to go no further than Boston, it has been under consideration whether they might not be immediately and very usefully employed in making a descent upon some part of the western coast of France. And I have this morning the King's orders to the Admiral and General jointly, forthwith to request their opinion whether such an enterprise may not be immediately undertaken with the force they have with them." Duke of Newcastle to Lord Sandwich, August 22nd, 1746. Sandwich Papers.

have risen or may be disposed to rise, and cause an immediate diversion in Flanders." With these various objects in view he suggested that the expedition might go up the river at Bordeaux, or attack Port l'Orient, Rochelle or Rochefort; and, after carrying out its operations, return to England or Ireland to be ready to go to America in the spring of the following year<sup>1</sup>. As secrecy would be of the highest importance, the fleet, which was lying at Portsmouth waiting for a wind, was to sail immediately the wind came fair, as though it were going to America. But it was to put into Plymouth instead of going on, and there await further orders.

St Clair was much agitated when he found his random remark taken so literally, and he wrote in some heat to explain that when he had made the suggestion he had not seriously thought it out. His letter gives some indication of the method in which the war was being conducted.

"It was," he wrote, "when your Grace and some other of the King's servants began to see that things would not be got ready in time to carry the Quebec plan into execution, and then your Grace said that it was hard that after hiring transports and putting the nation to an infinite expense that no benefit would be got to the Public from it. I then at random and as the first thing that came into my head said, why may we not frighten the French and alarm them as they have done us. by sending this squadron with the troops now ordered to some part of the coast of France, and as all their regular troops are on their Flanders and German frontiers it's not impossible but that such an alarm may make them recall some of them<sup>2</sup>."

St Clair's idea appears to have been to hover off the coast and make a pretence of landing men, after the manner of General Erle, Sir George Byng and Lord Dursley in July 1708, and not to commit himself to the more serious business of a descent on, and occupation of, French territory; and in replying to the Duke's letter he and Lestock said they were unable to give an opinion on the feasibility of the plan as they had neither plans of the land, charts of the coast, information as to the defences ashore or approaches by sea, nor pilots to conduct the squadron. Failing this information, they said, they could give no opinion worth having, but if the Administration would give definite orders as to what they wanted done they would carry those orders into execution.

The orders followed in a letter of the 26th August. In these the commanders were told to go to l'Orient or Rochefort, and St Clair was instructed to do all he could to procure a diversion in Flanders "which is one great end of this expedition." If he could establish himself at any place further reinforcements would be sent to hold it. No mention was made of the vague previous suggestion of a Breton Protestant rising.

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Newcastle to General St Clair, August 22nd, 1746. S.P. Dom.

<sup>2</sup> General St Clair to Duke of Newcastle, August 23rd, 1746.



In reply to this order St Clair wrote a letter which showed that he was wholly sceptical as to the prospects of the enterprise and in every way unprepared to carry it out. One suggestion he threw in, namely, that as Rochelle was the furthest place from Flanders it appeared to him the best place to make such a diversion; but in a letter of the following day, signed by both St Clair and Lestock, these officers definitely stated that they considered an attack on any of the places impracticable.

To this extremely cold letter the Duke replied that the King was sorry to see so many difficulties being raised. As to pilots, he had got hold of a Captain Cook who was well acquainted with the Breton coast, and others could be found at the Channel Islands; and as to maps of the country it is said that he forwarded St Clair a map of the province of Gascony, but whether this be true or not cannot be sure, though certainly the Duke's ignorance of geography was a byword<sup>1</sup>. In the end it was decided that the expedition should go to the coast of France. Anson concurred in this destination of the squadron, and thought also the attempt might be attended with success—an opinion which gave great gratification to the Duke, who replied to Anson that he was glad to hear of his approval, especially as both St Clair and Lestock were so doubtful: "However," he continued, "it is determined to try it: and if no good comes of it, I think no hurt can; for the Admiral will certainly not risk the fleet unnecessarily in hazardous navigation<sup>2</sup>." Such was the spirit in which this expedition was conceived and despatched.

This letter was written in consequence of a representation from Lord Vere Beauclerk, for though the Duke had consulted Anson, who was about to sail with the Western Squadron, as to the practicability of the scheme, he had not thought of informing him that on August 22nd a decision to alter the objective from Canada to the coast of France had been made. It was not until Lord Vere Beauclerk wrote and pointed out that "some jumble" might be caused unless the commander of the Western Squadron knew what was transpiring that the information was sent to him<sup>3</sup>. The subsequent operations of the Western Squadron and St Clair's expedition were distinct.

<sup>1</sup> See Horace Walpole's letters to Sir H. Mann and *Memoirs of George II* and the Duke's views as to the locality of Cape Breton.

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle to Anson, September 3rd, 1746. S.P. Dom. Naval.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Vere Beauclerk seems to have reposed little confidence in the discretion of his colleague Grenville. "Lest this expedition should come out sooner than your Grace may expect," he wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, "I can't help acquainting you I am as sure as I can be of anything I did not actually hear, that the Duke of Bedford told George Grenville of it yesterday, just as he was setting out for Stowe, where of course it will be communicated to that old Lord, and who he will not whisper it to I leave your Grace to judge." S.P. Dom. Naval, 31.

On September 3rd, when the Duke was writing his characteristic letter to Anson, the joint commanders of the expedition to the French coast made their decision that l'Orient should be their first objective. As the coast was little known, the Admiral detached Captain Cotes with a small squadron<sup>1</sup> to find a safe anchorage and a good landing place so that on the arrival of the expedition the troops could be disembarked before the enemy could get any warning of what was coming. Cotes was also ordered to reconnoitre the fortifications between the Ile de Groix and the mainland, and those of Port Louis itself, and bring back a report as to whether the force would be sufficient to carry out the attack.

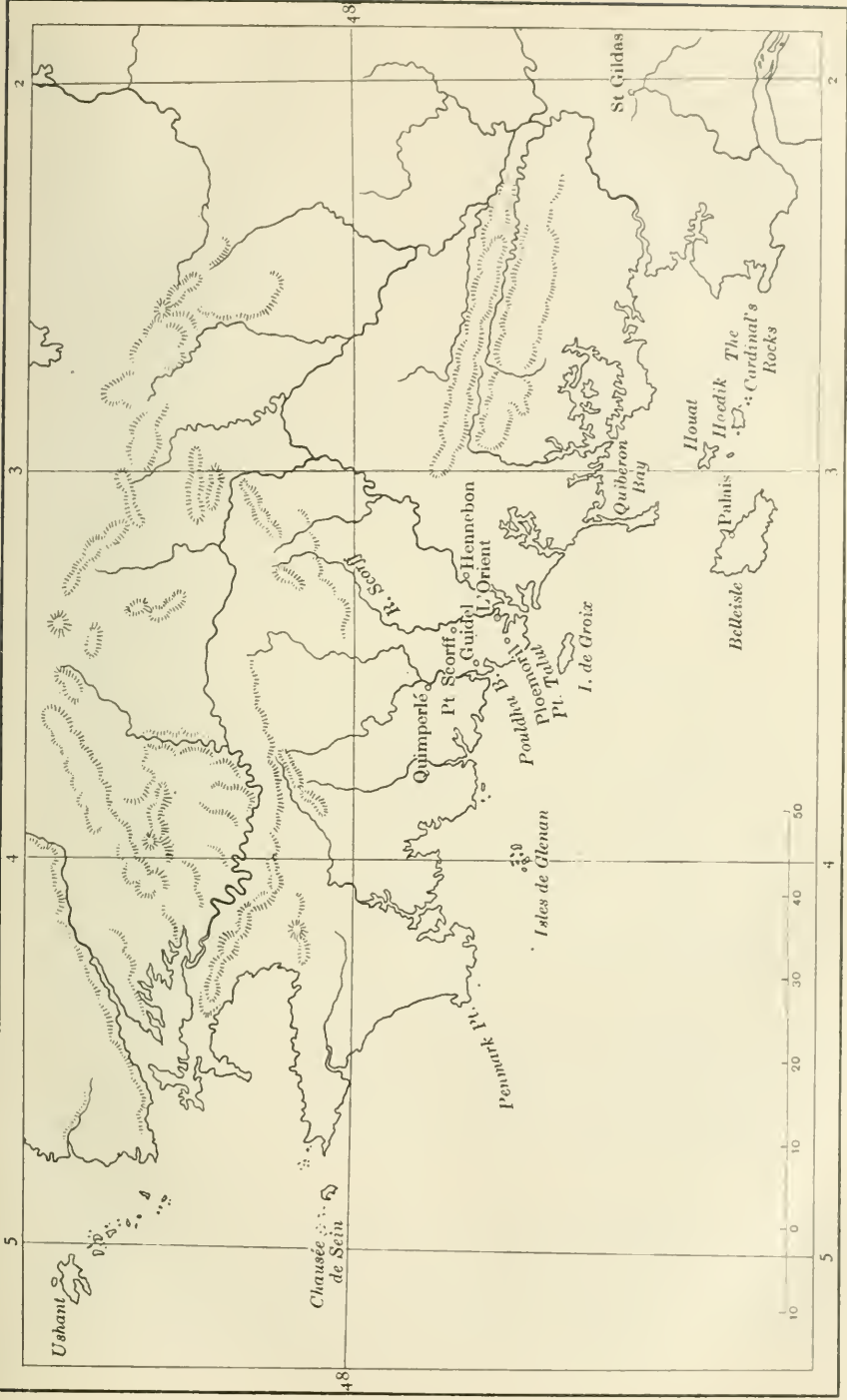
As soon as the Duke received the information that Port l'Orient was decided on as the first point of attack he wrote and directed the expedition to proceed at once<sup>2</sup>, and four days later the squadron with 55 transports sailed, and arrived on the evening of the 18th September off Ile de Groix after a favourable passage of three days. Here Cotes, who had sailed on the 6th, rejoined with information that there was a favourable landing place about ten miles from l'Orient, and thither the squadron steered. Its approach was wholly unexpected, but beacon fires were lighted along the coast that evening, and as the ships stood in past Ile de Groix the batteries on the island opened a hot but ineffective fire. Late that night the whole fleet was at anchor about nine miles to the westward of the estuary of the Scorff between Pointe Talut and Pouldhu Bay—a road open very nearly from W.N.W. to south. For any hindrance caused by the defences it appears that the squadron might have proceeded right up the Channel to l'Orient; but the Admiral had neither charts nor pilots to indicate which were the approaches.

The exposed nature of the anchorage rendered it important to land the troops at once. No shipping could expect to lie long in security at that advanced season of the year, and it was therefore intended to take the fleet round to Quiberon Bay while the troops marched across to Pancors and Hennebon, alarming the country and procuring thereby, it was hoped, the desired diversion in Flanders. Once in Quiberon, with the fleet securely anchored and in a position to ensure their retreat, the troops could be entrenched and hold the position to the last moment in order to render the diversion as effective as possible.

Covered by the bomb-vessels the transports were moved close in shore on the morning of the 20th. As they did so a number of militia, estimated at 3000 but in reality much smaller, together with some

<sup>1</sup> 'Edinburgh,' 'Ruby,' 'Hastings,' 'Tavistock' and a cutter, the 'Royal George.'

<sup>2</sup> Duke of Newcastle to Gen. St Clair, September 11th, 1746. S.P. Dom.



L'ORIENT AND ITS ENVIRONS



cavalry appeared on the beach to dispute the landing; but three 40 gun ships were ordered in by Cotes, a feint was made to land at the disputed point, and the first body of about 600 men was quickly put ashore at another place equally commodious and some distance away; with this first detachment went the General and two Brigadiers. An attempt made by the militia to oppose the landing was easily broken up, more troops were quickly put ashore, a detachment of 1000 men under Brigadier O'Farrell moved inland and secured themselves at Guidel, and the whole disembarkation was complete by the morning of the 21st September.

Next day the advance on l'Orient was begun. The army moved in two columns, leaving the marines at the landing place to carry out their established function of covering the disembarkation of the field guns and stores. A hundred men were dropped to hold Guidel. Some opposition was met with by O'Farrell's column, which was attacked by the French Militia on its march; a little confusion and disorder occurred in Richbell's and Frampton's regiments, but thanks to the readiness of Captain James Murray who advanced a company of grenadiers with great promptitude and drove off the attack, the advance was not greatly delayed.

While the army was thus advancing the field artillery was being landed, 70 quarter gunners from the squadron under the command of Lieutenant Osborne of the Navy being told off to work the guns. The enemy had meantime erected a one-gun battery on the eminence to the westward of Quimperlé with which they were considerably annoying the transports. This was quickly disposed of. A landing party of 160 men from the squadron under Captain Maisterson took the battery, turned the gun on its owners and then flung it over the cliff. Not content with this Maisterson manned the boats again and pulled up the river with his party, burnt a considerable quantity of shipping and brought off some laden vessels as prizes.

While the landing was proceeding in this successful manner, Lestock, in order effectually to cut off the district by sea, detached the 'Exeter,' 'Tavistock' and 'Royal George' cutter to Quiberon, first to reconnoitre and sound and then to cruise in the passages between Cadmaes and Belleisle; and the 'York,' 'Saphire' and 'Fly' to cruise between Glenans and the Ile de Groix.

Everything so far had gone very well. The opposition had been trifling and the engineers who had examined the defences of the town of l'Orient had reported that it was defended by only a thin loop-holed wall, was without a ditch and could be laid in ashes in 24 hours from the spot they had selected for the erection of a battery.

Next morning, September 22nd, the General summoned the town to surrender; and while he awaited the return of the officer charged with the message he went on board the flagship to hold a council of war at which he, Lestock, O'Farrell and Commodore Cotes were present. The engineer and the captain of the artillery were called in and both expressed the view that the town was a place of no strength, whose walls could be breached by a couple of 12-pounders and a 10-inch mortar: or the houses themselves could be destroyed by bombs. In consequence of this report, delivered in no uncertain tones, it was agreed that if the summons were refused, the town should be attacked as proposed. The seamen were to hoist out the heavy artillery and haul it to the camp, and the marines, with the exception of a number sufficient for a beach guard, to join the army inland. In accordance with this decision Cotes began at once to hoist the guns out, and by working all night they were got ashore, and a relief party of seamen landed to haul them to the camp.

The General, immediately the decision had been made to attack the town, landed at Ploemeur to receive the answer to his summons. This was brought by the deputies of the town, who agreed to surrender upon terms to the effect that the regular troops should be allowed to withdraw with arms, horses, baggage and all honours of war, and the militia to disperse to the villages to which they belonged; while in addition the agents of the East India Company demanded that their warehouses and shipping should be untouched. As the acceptance of these terms would have left the conquest an entirely barren one St Clair refused them, and insisted on surrender at discretion, but this the Governor, the Marquis de l'Hôpital, declined.

Preparations for battering the town next day were therefore begun<sup>1</sup>. The guns reached the camp in the morning and the seamen began mounting them under the direction of the engineers, so that by the morning of September 25th the battery was ready. The fall of the town appeared now to be merely a matter of hours; everything had progressed favourably and the perfect harmony existing between the land and sea forces had resulted in an expeditious performance of all services.

But at this point a series of almost incredible events took place which changed the whole situation. The engineers suddenly discovered that the battery could not breach the walls, as the place that had been selected for its erection was beyond the range of the guns; the furnace for heating the shot had not been brought; and there was

<sup>1</sup> The militia who were formed from the inhabitants of the seaboard provinces had been organised in 1681 for the defence of the coast. Pajol, *Guerres sous Louis XV.*

not sufficient ammunition to keep up a continuous fire. The difficulty of the furnace was soon got over, 150 seamen from the squadron bringing it up that afternoon together with two more 12-pounders; but except throwing a few bombs into the town nothing was done towards reducing it.

These extraordinary representations of the engineers, so completely reversing their former verdict, caused the General to hold another council of war at 5 P.M. on that day<sup>1</sup>. At this council the chief artillery officer reported that stores and ammunition came in so slowly that he saw no probability of being supplied with ammunition fast enough to keep the battery employed, and he feared that as there were now only 34 rounds for each of the four guns and no shell for the 10-inch mortar, the service of reducing the town could not be completed so soon as he had anticipated. The captain of the artillery, who had not been able to reconnoitre personally on account of a bad attack of the gout, gave his opinion that as no horses could be had to draw the heavy artillery, as the roads were so bad after the heavy rain and the traffic over them, and as the enemy could mount six guns to each one the army could get into position, nothing could be done.

After hearing these gloomy views the council dispersed and met again twice on the following day. Both the brigadiers and the artillery officers considered it useless to continue the attempt if it was impossible to breach the walls. St Clair, in his subsequent explanation of the failure wrote: "Your Grace will easily perceive that with respect to the difficulty of the enterprise the whole resulted from the ignorance of those who have nothing of the Engineer but the name and the pay."

Still, such as they were, they were his "technical experts" whose positive opinion could not be ignored and it was felt there was nothing left to do but abandon the enterprise, spike the guns and mortar that had been landed, and re-embark the troops. The army decamped from before l'Orient after dark and arrived at the coast at 3 A.M. where with all needful precautions, covered by sloops and armed vessels, the soldiers were put silently back on board. On that very same evening, at about 9 P.M., l'Hôpital on his side came to a decision that the place was untenable and decided to surrender. He came out of the town to arrange final terms with the English commander, only to find no one with whom to treat. Four spiked guns, a mortar and a furnace for heating shot were all that remained of the invading army!

The news that l'Orient was endangered had flown rapidly to Paris where the place was given up for lost. According to the first accounts

<sup>1</sup> September 25th.

received there the militia had fled in confusion and nothing stood in the way of the British forces. "Had the English taken advantage of their first consternation they might at once have possessed themselves of Port l'Orient," wrote a French letter-writer at the time<sup>1</sup>, "but [they were] stopped probably by apprehensions of ambuscades and mistrusting the great facility of their debarkation: and amused themselves by making an intrenchment to secure their retreat." The delay in the advance in the first instance gave the enemy time to mount guns and present an appearance of being defended; resolution alone was lacking to take advantage of the situation.

The General threw the blame on the engineers—one is reminded of Vernon and his contemptuous reference to the "pretended engineers" of Wentworth's army—but it can hardly be said that the qualities of determination, by which alone obstacles can be overcome, were displayed by any member of the expedition.

The design of marching to Quiberon had been abandoned as all the bridges had been broken down by the enemy. The troops were embarked only just in time on the 28th, for a heavy gale from the S.W. sprang up on the 29th and stopped all communication with the shore. Next day a council of war was called to decide what further operations should be undertaken. The majority voted that the squadron should return to Spithead and the transports to Ireland; but both Lestock and Sinclair rejected this proposal. A diversion for Flanders, they said, had to be kept in view as the principal object, and to withdraw from the coast now would simply defeat the intention; and they therefore decided to sail for Quiberon and land there. With this object the fleet weighed on the 1st October.

News was now received that a French man-of-war had been seen in Palais Road, and Lestock detached the 'Exeter' to take her. When the 'Exeter' came in sight the French vessel weighed and ran inshore at the S.W. end of Quiberon, close under the muzzles of a battery mounting some eight guns. The 'Exeter' followed her in, and brought up close alongside her, with a ridge of rocks half a cable astern and opened a heavy fire. She was shortly after joined by the 'Tavistock' 20, which anchored ahead, and the 'Poole,' 44, both of which ships added their fire to that of the 'Exeter,' till, after a gallant defence of four hours the French ship, her masts gone over the side and only a few guns remaining, drove on shore. She turned out to be the 'Ardent,' 64, one of d'Anville's ill-fated squadron. Most of her crew got ashore, but so strong a gale was blowing that it was with great

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle Papers. The letter is a translation, not the original.



difficulty that the 'Exeter' clawed herself off the land, and it was impossible to send in boats to burn the wreck<sup>1</sup>.

The squadron and some of the transports anchored in Quiberon Bay on October 2nd, but four of the latter, with 900 men on board, were missing, so that the army was considerably reduced. Troops were however landed on the Peninsula, and a small fort mounting 18 guns was taken, but little was done ashore, for there was nothing to attack. At sea however there was now an object worth cruising for. By the capture of the 'Ardent' it was found that d'Anville's squadron had been dispersed in a gale off Cape Sable on the coast of Nova Scotia and might possibly be returning to France. Lestock therefore sent out cruising ships to watch for and give notice of his approach<sup>2</sup> in order that he might have early intelligence, and take out the rest of his force to intercept them. Anson regarded this as a mistake and very tartly expressed his surprise that after getting such certain intelligence from the 'Ardent' of the shattered state of d'Anville's squadron, Lestock did not at once cruise for them with all his ships off Ushant<sup>3</sup>; but with a fleet of transports at anchor in an open bay and an army of nearly 2000 men under his charge, some on board and some on shore, it is not improbable that Lestock was disinclined to take away the direct protection of the squadron and cruise in open waters, where, if he missed the enemy, his whole military force would be exposed to most imminent danger. For other ships besides the 'Ardent' might make Quiberon Bay their port, having made their landfall at Finisterre; and the squadron cruising off Ushant would be of small avail to intercept these or prevent the transport fleet from being destroyed.

The main body of the squadron therefore remained at Quiberon. The troops were encamped and billeted in the neighbouring villages, defences were thrown up on the isthmus, and reconnaissances were made of the neighbouring defences. General Graham examined St Gildas but considered it too strong to be attacked, and after five days had been spent in this manner the decision was come to that nothing was to be gained by remaining where they were, as the moment for deriving any benefit from a diversion had now passed. Before leaving, however, it was decided to reduce the fort on the island of Houat, and the 'Exeter,' 'Hastings' and 'Tavistock' moved in and bombarded it, landing 130 seamen to destroy the works. The fort which had only eight guns and was

<sup>1</sup> Log of 'Exeter.'

<sup>2</sup> Between Glenans and Ile de Groix—'Saphire,' between Ile de Groix and Belleisle—'Poole,' between Belleisle and the Cardinals—'Exeter,' 'Postboy,' 'Ruby' and 'Tavistock.'

<sup>3</sup> Bedford Papers. Anson to the Duke of Bedford, November 4th, 1746.

nearly deserted, offered little resistance, and on the following day another landing party was put ashore at Hoedic where a similar small fort was surrendered. The next two days were spent in destroying all the forts and their armaments, embarking the brass guns of the 'Ardent,' which had been burnt, burning all the local shipping and re-embarking the army; and on the 12th October the expedition got under sail to return, the squadron shaping course for Spithead and the transports for Ireland.

In this manner an inglorious enterprise came to an end redeemed by one gratifying factor only, the perfect harmony which existed between the two services. St Clair in his report to the Duke of Newcastle wrote that the Admiral "had so well supported this expedition by not only granting regularly all that was asked for, but more than the army could expect or think of requesting," and although Lestock was jointly blamed with Sinclair for the result of the enterprise and was treated by the Duke of Bedford in a highly intolerant manner, he can in no way be held responsible for the failure. His crews were unremittingly engaged in the work of landing, transporting, mounting and serving the guns and attempting to maintain a supply of ammunition; and there is no reason to associate him with the decision to abandon the attack on the fortifications of l'Orient.

It may be thought that the peninsula of Quiberon, having been seized, might have been held longer. Whether any good would have resulted from thus holding it is very doubtful; not more than 2500 men remained after the four transports parted company on their way from Pouldhu Bay to Quiberon, and this number would have been wholly unable to maintain themselves in their position if any serious move were made against them. The gist of the matter lies however in the fact that the expedition would already have exercised whatever diversionary effect it was capable of producing; no further withdrawals from Flanders would serve any purpose, for the French army there was already going into winter quarters. Thus, there was no reason for remaining longer.

The failure in the field appears to have been due to the technical experts, primarily the indifferent engineers, and to the great measure of dependence reposed in them; and after that, to the lack of driving power and determination on the part of the officer in command. The determining cause of the failure of the whole enterprise lies however deeper than this, and is to be found in the manner in which the expedition was planned. Throughout the whole of the stages from the beginning, there was an absence of any settled governing policy. The expedition to Canada was a pure afterthought, its transfer to the coast

of France was another. Of really serious preparation such as an undertaking of this character requires there was none, and the expedition was sent off by the Ministry in the worst possible circumstances. It is the duty of a Ministry to pave the way for success, and by careful and elaborate organisation to make the task of the officers who have the conduct of the active operations as easy as possible. This the Ministry did not do, and for their failure in the fundamental business of conducting the war they must receive the blame<sup>1</sup>.

It has been shown that in the first instance the proposal put forward in the spring was to take Quebec and lead up to the conquest of Canada. Such an operation should however have been considered earlier in the year than the end of March. There was then no time to make preparations, to raise troops on the other side, or to allow for any delays which might occur in the transport of the army from England. The preparations which were made consisted in giving orders for a certain number of troops to be raised and a certain proportion of stores to be sent, based on a precedent of a previous expedition, which, having been a complete failure, gave but little information of value. There is in all this none of that infinite care taken by Pitt in his painstaking and thorough consideration of every detail for the expeditions conducted under his direction<sup>2</sup>; instead, we see the whole thing settled in a matter of inside a fortnight—a time which while it reflects credit for promptitude of decision can have admitted of no careful examination into essentials either of principle or detail. St Clair's orders were dated May 14, and on that date his expedition lay still unready at Spithead. On about the same date in 1758 Wolfe was fuming because he had not yet sailed from Louisbourg<sup>3</sup>. Such an expedition as this should have been planned and prepared in the winter and have been ready to sail in the early spring without any of those delays which afforded the enemy such opportunity of learning its intention.

When once the decision to send the expedition had been made, every possible precaution to secure both ends of the line of passage was necessary. Yet although advices were received early in the year that squadrons, transports and troops were fitting out at Brest and Rochefort, and that a force was expected from Ferrol, no adequate steps were taken to ensure that the enemy could not interfere from his Biscay

<sup>1</sup> "He only does his business well who provides the materials beforehand, and those only are fit to conduct military affairs who render the execution easy, by forethought and preparation." Middleton to Mr Fordyce, August 16th, 1798. *Barham Papers*, vol. II. p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> See Kimball, *Correspondence of William Pitt with Colonial Governors*; and Corbett, *England in the Seven Years' War*.

<sup>3</sup> Actually May 7th, 1758.

ports. Martin was ordered to watch the ports, even to attack Rochefort; but the force he was given was wholly insufficient: and the orders themselves changed from day to day and reflected no sustained policy. The consequence was that d'Anville sailed, and before making for Cape Breton cruised with his superior force in hopes of intercepting the British expedition, protected as it was known to be by Cotes's escort only. Not only did d'Anville get away, but thanks to Martin's weakness in cruisers, he got away unseen, and for weeks St Clair's army was held up at Spithead owing to the uncertainty of the enemy's whereabouts. Then, when it was known the French had gone westerly, the expedition was ordered to sail; but south-westerly winds and lack of provisions delayed it. Newcastle in writing to St Clair on July 17th spoke of "the unavoidable delays" which had detained the expedition and had made the season of the year too late to attempt the reduction of Canada<sup>1</sup>; but in so describing them he misused the adjective. If proper measures had been taken the French would not have sailed; and if the plan of campaign of the ensuing year had been thought of beforehand and the preparations made earlier, these delays need not have occurred. They were avoidable by an exercise of forethought; the expedition could have sailed long before the disturbing influence of d'Anville's squadron had been felt, and by the time the French left the roads of Aix—if even they were suffered to get so far—St Clair's army would have been in the St Lawrence. Whether when it got there, it would have achieved its object is open to doubt. The number of troops provided compares but poorly with those eventually required in the successful campaign of 1759, and was, in the opinion of the officers, in Cape Breton, wholly insufficient; while the General to whom the walls of l'Orient presented so formidable an obstacle might have found the difficulties of the approaches to Quebec no less insuperable.

When it was decided that Canada could not be conquered during that year, we find the Duke of Newcastle seeking some employment of the troops to justify the expense already incurred. The French armament was still in Canada. Nova Scotia and Newfoundland were threatened and our possessions in the West Indies were also open to attack. The French might begin their campaign in the early spring, and on our side the delays that had been experienced in getting the army away might well be repeated in the following year. Yet no suggestion was made to profit by the lesson and ensure our troops being on the spot in America time enough to protect the territories that might be threat-

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Newcastle to General St Clair. S.P. Dom. 98.

ened. Instead, an attempt on the coast of France was proposed. That this might operate as a diversion was an excuse rather than an object; and even as a diversion it was too late. The proposal thus to employ it was put forward in the vaguest possible terms at the very end of August, and by the time the expedition could reach the French coast it would already be too late to produce an effect on a campaign which was then so nearly at an end. Namur surrendered on September 1<sup>st</sup>, before the expedition sailed from St Helen's. The French conquest of the low countries was complete by September 20th, two days after the squadron anchored off the Quimperlé river<sup>1</sup>, and although the allied army had still to be driven from the vicinity of Liège, the army under Marshal Saxe, relieved from the task of the siege of Namur, was powerful enough to do this even while detaching a sufficient force to deal with the small body of 3500 men under St Clair. As it turned out, the decisive action was fought before any detachment was made. The news of the arrival of Lestock's squadron off l'Orient was transmitted to Paris, and from Versailles orders were posted to Saxe to send troops to deal with the invaders. Twenty battalions of infantry, two regiments of cavalry and one of dragoons<sup>2</sup> were ordered to proceed to Brittany under the command of MM. de Contades and de la Fare; but before they left they took part in the decisive action of Roucoux which was fought on Sept. 30/Oct. 11; after it was over the armies went into winter quarters and the troops destined for Brittany were set in march. The Duke of Newcastle, writing on October 14th, plumed himself on the fact that directly the French received news of the landing they gave orders for troops to be detached, and on that premiss justified the expedition<sup>3</sup>; but as the troops did not leave the army until the campaign was already finished this justification falls to the ground. To make matters worse still the expedition was sent without the smallest information of the country or the coast being given to the commanders. No means of transporting artillery across country were provided, and although their letters showed that both the General and the Admiral had not the smallest belief in any probability of success, no attempt was made to replace them by officers of a more sanguine temperament. Indeed the spirit of levity which is expressed in his letter of September 3rd to

<sup>1</sup> "Le 1<sup>er</sup> d'Octobre au matin, la capitulation est signée, et la garnison se rend prisonnière de guerre...Ainsi se termina la conquête de tous les Pays Bas autrichiens." Pajol, *Guerres sous Louis XV*, vol. III. p. 475. The capitulation referred to is that of the outlying castle of Namur.

<sup>2</sup> Pajol, *Guerres sous Louis XV*, vol. III. p. 476.

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle Papers. The information he had was that 20 battalions and 23 squadrons had been sent. Actually, 20 battalions, one regiment of dragoons and two of cavalry were detached by Saxe. Pajol, *Guerres sous Louis XV*, vol. III. p. 476.

Anson<sup>1</sup> is a sufficient condemnation of his methods of making war, even if the results had been different.

It is, however, true that in spite of all these mismanagements l'Orient might have been taken if other measures had been pursued and, although too late to produce any effect on the campaign of 1746, its capture would probably have affected the events of the following year. The French would have been obliged to strengthen their defences on the seaboard, troops would have been occupied in Brittany and Normandy to the advantage of the Allies in Italy and the Low Countries; while, in addition to these military drawbacks France would have suffered the loss of her great East India port, with its storehouses, docks, shipping and supplies, of which the direct value was over a million and a half, and the indirect and military values incalculable.

While this unfortunate miscarriage was in progress, the command that had been rendered vacant through Martin striking his flag had been transferred to Admiral Anson, who while holding the command retained his seat at the Admiralty board. The squadron was at the same time increased, and the bulk of the ships to the westward except those with Lestock were put under his command, so that one great difficulty with which Martin had to contend was removed. The squadron now consisted of seventeen ships of the line, six 50-gun ships, four frigates and two sloops<sup>2</sup>. The Admiral's instructions, dated August 6th, ran as follows:

"As soon as such a number [of the ships] as you shall judge sufficient are got ready for sailing, you are to proceed with them down the Channel, leaving such orders, for those which are not ready, to follow you, as you judge proper. You are to call off of Plymouth for such other of the ships of your squadron as are ready, and leaving orders for the rest to follow you, you are to proceed out of the Channel, and taking also under your command such ships of your squadron as you may meet with at sea you are to cruise on such station or stations as you shall judge proper (according to the intelligence you may receive) for intercepting and destroying the ships of the enemy, their convoys outward and homeward bound, and for suppressing their privateers and annoying their trade and for protecting the trade of his Majesty's subjects.

"You are at liberty to send detachments from you, when ever you may judge it necessary, to cruise on separate stations for the better meeting with the ships of the enemy, and to give them such orders as you think proper for that purpose.

"You are also at liberty to send such ships of your squadron as shall be foul or sickly into port, and to order their captains to return to you or otherwise as you shall judge best for the service.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> 'Duke,' 90; 'Namur,' 74; 'Yarmouth,' 'Kent,' 'Prince Frederick,' 'Hampton Court,' 'Monmouth,' 'Captain' and 'Elizabeth,' 70; 'Defiance,' 'Augusta,' 'Sunderland,' 'Windsor,' 'Nottingham,' 'Princess Louisa,' 'Lyon' and 'Eagle,' 60; 'Falkland,' 'Salisbury,' 'Portland,' 'Maidstone,' 'Advice,' 'Portland,' prize, 50; 'Hector' and 'Mermaid,' 44; 'Inverness,' 24; 'Amazon,' 27; 'Despatch,' 10.14; 'Falcon,' 10.14.

"You are to continue on this service so long as you shall judge yourself able to put these orders in execution, and then to return into port with all or part of your squadron, proceeding with those above the fourth rate to Portsmouth, and sending such as you think fit into Plymouth and to leave such orders with those you shall keep at sea as you shall judge best for his Majesty's service."

The freedom accorded to Anson, as compared with that to Martin, is very noticeable. The whole conduct of the squadron was left in his hands and he was free to operate against the enemy in such manner as he should judge proper. When we compare Anson's eventual success with the lack of success of Martin, we must take into consideration the different circumstances under which each was acting—the one with a small squadron and continually interfered with by the Admiralty, the other with a far larger force and with liberty to dispose it as he should think fit, within the general limits of the object assigned to him which was summed up in a single sentence.

Anson repaired to Portsmouth on receipt of his instructions, but like his predecessors he found great difficulty in getting even a small squadron together. Although the influence of a Commissioner of the Admiralty was able to give an impulse to business which might not be produced by an officer unconnected with headquarters, it was the end of August before he had a force available. In the meantime Boscawen returned on August 18th from his unsuccessful search for Macnémara, of whom news was at last received five days later. Captain John Byron of the 'Syren' had then brought in the intelligence that the French commander, with his convoy of about 90 sail, had put into Coruña and had there been joined by 12 French men-of-war from Rochefort, who were to see him safely through the Bay, sailing with the first fair wind.

Urgent instructions were at once sent to Anson to hasten to sea to intercept the convoy. But the ships were not yet ready, and it was not until ten days later that the Admiral was able to make up an advance squadron<sup>1</sup> under Boscawen, composed mainly of the ships which that officer had recently brought back from sea, with instructions to proceed direct to Finisterre to intercept Macnémara and cruise N.W. 20 leagues from that Cape until joined by himself. Two days later (September 4th) Anson got to sea with six more large ships and two small ones<sup>2</sup>, stood down into the Bay and picked up, on September 14th, a squadron already cruising there under Captain Charles Watson<sup>3</sup>, and with this respectable force went on to Finisterre.

<sup>1</sup> 'Hampton Court,' 'Prince Frederick,' 'Namur,' 'Sunderland,' 'Plymouth,' 'Monmouth,' 'Windsor,' 'Advice,' 'Mermaid,' 'Panther,' 'Ambuscade.' Instructions of September 2nd, 1746. ('Embuscade' had been renamed 'Ambuscade.')

<sup>2</sup> 'Yarmouth,' 'Kent,' 'Captain,' 'Lyon,' 'Portland,' 'Falkland,' 'Amazon' and 'Falcon' sloop.

<sup>3</sup> 'Princess Louisa,' 'Elizabeth,' 'Salisbury,' 'Augusta,' 'Defiance' and 'Viper' sloop.

One of the most noticeable things in this, Anson's first command of a squadron, is the diligence in which day after day he exercised it in forming line of battle, bearing down together, and the evolutions of the attack<sup>1</sup>. The care taken by Anson on all occasions of his command afloat to practise his captains tactically is very marked. In the spring of the following year, when Peter Warren was his admirable second in command, we find that officer writing to his Commander-in-Chief:

"Sir, how necessary 'tis to exercise the fleet! 'Tis pretty difficult to keep a good line close by the wind; and I think when you next please to exercise the fleet in separate divisions, and abreast, the line should be formed at a distance one division to windward of the other, as you shall judge proper, and the windward one to go down on the leeward in order of battle so near as you would have them engage an enemy...."<sup>2</sup>

Anson, in fact, was practising his squadron and drilling it in the attack continuously; and one can wish that he should have had an opportunity of showing the results of his training against a more equal force than that which he met on May 3rd, 1747.

The squadron joined Boscawen in the neighbourhood of Finisterre on September 18th, and there spreading his ships a mile apart to cover as much water as possible, Anson then cruised steadily. This spreading of the ships of the line was the result of his deficiency in frigates, a want which he expressed more than once to the Admiralty, as Martin had done before him<sup>3</sup>. It is possible that Anson's experience in these two campaigns led to the programme of frigate building which followed this war.

The situation which had now developed on both sides of the Atlantic was as follows: Anson and Boscawen with a strong squadron were cruising in company off Finisterre in order to intercept the convoy under Macnémara which was believed still to be in Coruña. This convoy consisted of some 75 sail of merchants and was reported to be guarded by three men-of-war of Macnémara's command, together with 12 more sail of French ships. At the same time St Clair's raid was being carried out by another squadron and an army upon the great East India

<sup>1</sup> Thus: "Sept. 14th. Exercised line of battle ahead and abreast. Exercised great and small guns. Sept. 15th. Made the signal for the line of battle abreast. 3 pm. Hauled down the signal for the line of battle abreast and made the signal for the ships that lead on the starboard tack to lead large..." and so on day after day. Log of 'Yarmouth.'

<sup>2</sup> Warren to Anson. April 23rd, 1747. B.M. Add. MS. 15957, f. 172.

<sup>3</sup> "In answer to that part of your letter reporting that you are greatly in want of some clean frigates and one or two 50-gun ships, their Lordships have ordered four 20-gun ships to cruise in the mouth of the Channel, which their Lordships hope will be sufficient for the privateers: and all the ships that can be spared when they are cleaned will be sent to you." Out letters, November 29th, 1746.



depôt at Port Louis. There was not believed to be any force of importance in Brest, and although d'Anville was in America and his whereabouts was still unknown, no interference was expected from him; for as Cape Breton had not yet been taken and the season was well advanced without his having returned, it was believed that he would have been obliged to postpone his attack until the spring. In the meantime there was nothing to be lost by waiting until some definite news was received as to whither he was gone. The principal object of these squadrons was for the present—September—confined to the attack on French trade, of which Macnémara's convoy, which had sheltered in Coruña, together with its large escort, was the most important quarry<sup>1</sup>.

On October 5th Anson received advice that a Spanish convoy was expected at Cadiz. The Mediterranean squadron was now occupied on the coast of Provence, and Cadiz was unwatched; so he dropped down

<sup>1</sup> *The Squadrons in Home Waters and at Cape Breton, September 1746.*

"Convoys and Cruisers"		Under Lestock on the coast of France attacking l'Orient	At Cape Breton
With Anson	With Boscawen		
'Yarmouth'	'Namur'	'Princessa'	'Kingston'
'Captain'	'Monmouth'	'Devonshire'	'Pembroke'
'Elizabeth'	'Prince Frederick'	'Edinburgh'	'Vigilant'
'Kent'	'Windsor'	'Tilbury'	'Canterbury'
'Princess Louisa'	'Sunderland'	'Superbe'	'Chester'
'Lyon'	'Advice'	'Exeter'	'Norwich'
'Defiance'	'Panther'	'York'	'Kinsale'
'Augusta'		'Ruby'	'Dover'
'Eagle'		'Hastings'	'Torrington'
'Salisbury'		'Poole'	'Rye'
'Falkland'		'Saphire'	'Hinchinbrook'
'Portland'		'Tavistock'	'Hind'
'Maidstone'		'Mortar'	'Shirley'
		'Vulcan'	'Albany'
			'Louisbourg'

Cruising off Cape  
Clear independently

'Nottingham'  
'Gloucester'  
'Portland's' prize, 50

In home ports

1, 2, 3 and 4 rates	...	13
5 rates	...	4
6 rates	...	2
Small craft	...	18

The Cape Breton squadron is included in the above as the operations of these months were connected with the French attack on Cape Breton. It was not yet known how d'Anville had fared: so far as was known he was either attacking Cape Breton or was intending to winter there and attack it in the spring. His return was not yet expected.

to the southward to endeavour to intercept it, reaching the latitude of St Vincent on October 14th<sup>1</sup>. The six weeks which then marked the limit of endurance of a squadron at sea were now nearly reached, and as his water was approaching exhaustion and his men were beginning to fall sick, he started working to the northward with the object of returning to Plymouth to refresh. He sent orders on the 18th to Boscawen to keep his squadron cruising ten to twenty-five leagues to the westward of Finisterre until he should rejoin him, and after strengthening him with two more ships<sup>2</sup> Anson returned with the remainder to Plymouth on the 28th October.

Meanwhile some news of d'Anville's squadron had reached the Admiralty. On October 1st the 'Exeter' had destroyed the 'Ardent' at anchor in Quiberon Bay, and ten days later another of d'Anville's ships, the 'Mars,' was met and taken by the 'Nottingham,' 60, Captain Saumarez, who was cruising for trade protection off Cape Clear, in an action in which the 'Mars' lost 40 men, her captor no more than three or four. From the return of these two ships it appeared possible if not probable that the remainder of d'Anville's squadron would follow, and when Anson on the day after his arrival in harbour received the news of their capture, and of their condition, he at once sent the 'Ambuscade' to Boscawen to order him to bring his squadron up from Finisterre to Ushant to intercept d'Anville, leaving two ships and a sloop<sup>3</sup> off Finisterre as a squadron of observation in case the French should make that Cape their landfall.

Boscawen had already anticipated the order. He had captured a prize on board of which letters were found which gave a full description of d'Anville's cruise. How the French admiral had passed through a terrible time, how storms and scurvy had stricken down his men, and how it was expected that he would be obliged to make the best of his way home were all described. Boscawen at once held a council of war consisting of himself, Mostyn and Geary, at which it was agreed that the squadron ought to move up to Brest and cruise there to intercept the French; and on October 28th—the day Anson was arriving at Plymouth—Boscawen had taken up a station about 30 leagues S.W. of Ushant, and was sending his news in to Anson, crossing the orders which were being sent out to him to do so. A new complexion was put upon the operations of the Western Squadron by these indications of the return of d'Anville. The principal object of Anson was no longer the capture of the French trade. His whole attention was centred on inter-

<sup>1</sup> Log of 'Yarmouth.'

<sup>2</sup> 'Monmouth' and 'Windsor' detached on October 18th and 24th respectively.

<sup>3</sup> 'Monmouth,' 'Windsor' and 'Falcon.'

cepting the French on their return from their unsuccessful attempt upon Louisbourg.

Louisbourg had had a fortunate escape. After the first report<sup>1</sup> of the sailing of the French expedition had proved to be inaccurate, the preparations for the attack upon Canada had continued. The raising of troops was pressed forward in the northern colonies<sup>2</sup>, the defences of Louisbourg were completed, and ships<sup>3</sup> were sent up the St Lawrence to survey the river and make themselves masters of its navigation. For two months nothing more was heard from Europe, and though the season was now too advanced for beginning any operations against Canada, it was expected that the English expedition would soon arrive and go into winter quarters ready for opening a campaign promptly in the following spring. All danger appeared to have passed, when on September 6th the feeling of security was shattered by the alarming news that not only had the expedition sailed from France, but was already upon the coast of Acadia. This intelligence was brought by a prize sent in by the 'Kinsale.' Captured a few days earlier off Anticosti, this prize—'La Judith' of Rochelle—formed one of the fleet of about 70 sail which had sailed from Aix in June. Fourteen large men-of-war escorted the transports, on board of which it was said there were 10,000 troops.

The enemy had been two and a half months at sea, so that there was little doubt that they would have to put into some convenient harbour to refresh before beginning operations. Chibouctou—the Halifax of

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* that sent by Martin on May 13th and received in Louisbourg on July 5th, see *ante*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> About 7500 colonial troops had been raised in August. The figures of available fighting men and of men voted and raised are deserving of notice:

	Estimated fighting men	Voted and either raised or nearly raised
Massachusetts ...	40,000	3000
New Hampshire	10,000	1000
Connecticut ...	26,000	1000
Rhode Island ...	13,000	300
New York... ..	26,000	1000
Jerseys ... ..	15,000	500
Pennsylvania ...	100,000	300
Maryland ... ..	35,000	300
Virginia ... ..	75,000	100

Shirley to Duke of Newcastle, August 22nd, 1746. S.P. Dom. Colonial, 5/753. At the same date a writer from the Northern Colonies says "I cannot help telling you that we are all ready to go distracted in these parts. I mean upon account of an expedition to Canada to see so noble an enterprise miscarry as undoubtedly it will for want of sending the forces in time. For now it is the latter end of August and they are not yet arrived when they ought to be sailing up the St Lawrence." *The Fool*, No. 66.

<sup>3</sup> The 'Kinsale' and 'Hind,' sloop. Townsend's Orders of July 27th.

to-day—and Le Havre were the most probable ports, and thither Townsend at once sent the 'Rye,' sloop, with orders first to examine the harbours and then to scout the whole length of the coast. At the same time he sent the 'Hind' to Boston to warn Shirley and Warren of this unpleasant interruption to their plans. Five days later the news was confirmed. The 'Hinchinbrook,' sloop, arrived in Louisbourg harbour on September 17th from Boston with the information that only the day before she had sighted a fleet of 29 sail of ships off Cape Canso, while shortly after, the situation was made more ugly by the report that a squadron of four heavy ships had left Cape François on August 27th, and were to join the Brest squadron in the attempt to recover Cape Breton<sup>1</sup>. Townsend thus found himself apparently threatened by a force of about 18 sail of heavy ships, several frigates and an army reported from various sources to be between 8000 and 15,000 strong.

For all the size of the enemy's force there was not much to be feared for Louisbourg for the moment. The defences of the town had by now been restored, and were stronger than they had ever been. With the squadron moored in close line of battle across the mouth and the smaller ships so placed in the harbour as to lend support to the most vulnerable parts of the shore defences, it would have been a hard task to take the town by storm. "I am under very little apprehension," wrote Knowles on September 19th, "about their attacking this place while we have the squadron here and can keep them out of the harbour. Annapolis Royal may fall, but I think unless the fleet winters there, and a superior squadron to our's is in these seas next spring, we may without difficulty with the newly raised forces in the colony and some troops from home, not only retake Annapolis but drive all the French out of Acadia." Townsend was no less confident that there was no danger to the fortress. The long passage which the French had made would, he felt sure, have caused much sickness, and before any operations could be undertaken by them, the troops would have to recover their health and the ships would need water and refreshment. With the season already so far advanced, it would by then be too late to begin a campaign against Louisbourg, although an attack upon Annapolis was not improbable.

<sup>1</sup> This information came from Boston brought by the master of a trading ship who had arrived from Cape François on September 19th. His ship had been detained for three weeks at Cape François and not allowed to leave until after the French squadron had sailed. The force in question was the squadron under Conflans, which after beating off Mitchell, got into Cape François on August 13th and sailed with the homeward trade on the 27th; it was reported that, after seeing the trade safe to the northward, Conflans was to join d'Anville in North American waters.

In the absence of accurate information as to the strength and condition of the French armament, Townsend did not judge it prudent to attempt to attack what was reputed to be so superior a squadron, and his efforts were directed towards endeavouring to get certain intelligence as to the actual strength and state of the enemy's force. With this object Knowles himself went down the coast in a schooner to reconnoitre. He returned at the end of September with news that the French were in Chibouctou; but he had been unable to get close enough to make sure of their strength. He had counted ten men-of-war and 40 transports, but as he could not be certain there were not more, he decided to make a closer inspection by carrying a flag of truce to d'Anville with an offer to exchange prisoners, of whom the English had some forty on their hands. Captain Scott was therefore sent on October 9th with a polite letter to the Duke offering to effect an exchange. This letter the Duke was never to receive; he had died a few days before. The French commander who succeeded him was too old a bird to be caught with such chaff as this, and though he received Scott with courtesy, he did not permit him to return, but extended to him a polite though enforced hospitality which lasted until the news he could take back would be of no service.

For this he had the best of reasons. If the English Admiral had known the utterly disabled state of the enemy it is probable that he would have taken his own small force to attack them in confidence of being able to destroy them<sup>1</sup>. The French fleet and army had had a terrible time. Leaving Aix Roads on June 11th they did not sight the

<sup>1</sup> The squadrons were as follows:

BRITISH SQUADRON			
Ships	Guns	Ships	Guns
'Pembroke' ...	60	'Dover' ...	44
'Kingston' ...	60	'Torrington' ...	44
'Canterbury' ...	60	'Panther' ...	44
'Vigilant' ...	64	'Fowey' ...	44
'Chester' ...	50	'Rye' ...	24
'Norwich' ...	50	and five small	
'Kinsale' ...	44	craft	

FRENCH SQUADRON			
Ships	Guns	Ships	Guns
'Northumberland'	74	'Tigre' ...	60
'Trident' ...	64	'Mercure' ...	50
'Ardent' ...	64	'Diamant' ...	50
'Mars' ...	64	'Borée' ...	50
'Leopard' ...	64	'Mégare' ...	30
'Alcide' ...	64	'Argonaute' ...	26
'Caubon' ...	60	'Prince d'Orange'	26

coast of Acadia until September. A storm then dispersed them and drove two of the frigates back across the Atlantic; the main body reached Chibouctou on September 6th, the crews and troops prostrated with scurvy. Eight hundred soldiers and 1500 seamen succumbed within a few days<sup>1</sup>, and all the efforts of the commander were directed towards burying his dead and endeavouring to restore his sick to health. D'Anville himself died of an apoplexy; his second in command, overwhelmed with the magnitude of the disaster, committed suicide; and the command passed to M. de la Jonquière, Anson's gallant opponent six months later in the action off Finisterre. It was he who received Scott on October 11th when he arrived with the flag of truce, and kept him his guest until the last days of the month, when the French squadron sailed for England, after an ineffectual attempt made by four ships and a few troops upon Annapolis.

Scott returned to Louisbourg on November 5th with an account of the helpless state of the enemy. The French, he reported, had gone back to France, thankful only for the mercy which had spared them complete annihilation and had permitted 18 out of 20 of their storeships to get through in safety to Quebec. "I pray God," wrote Knowles on November 8th when he had learned of this, "our western cruisers may meet them on their return and complete their destruction."

This prayer of Knowles's was echoed by the commanders at home, and every effort to bring off the much desired meeting was made so soon as the capture of the 'Ardent' and the 'Mars' showed that the enemy was coming home. Anson had at that moment reached Plymouth, Boscawen was still at sea with ten ships. As such information as was available showed that d'Anville might still have about 14 ships with him, Anson wrote and urged the Admiralty to send every ship possible from other services to reinforce him, while he pressed forward the refit and cleaning of the vessels which he had just brought home with his flag. In just under a fortnight he got to sea again himself with 11 ships<sup>2</sup>. His intention was to cruise with his whole force off Ushant till the 7th December, and then to drop down to Finisterre, where he would be in the way to intercept not only d'Anville if he made his landfall there, but also a fleet of Martinique ships that was known to have put into Cadiz and would be looking for an opportunity to slip into Rochelle.

<sup>1</sup> Lacour Gayet, *La Marine Militaire de la France sous Louis XV.*

<sup>2</sup> 'Yarmouth,' 'Kent,' 'Captain,' 'Princess Louisa,' 'Salisbury,' 'Augusta,' 'Falkland,' 'Elizabeth,' 'Princessa,' 'Edinburgh,' 'Panther,' 'Weazel,' sloop and a cutter. He sailed November 9th.

Making his first rendezvous ten to twenty leagues west from Ushant, Anson cruised as close in to Brest as he could in hard S.W. gales. The weather was tempestuous and the service terribly hard, but the conviction that the French must soon arrive buoyed up the spirits of the squadron. By uniting Boscawen's squadron with his own and continually relieving ships, not allowing them to spend one hour longer in harbour than was absolutely necessary for watering and making ready, he managed to keep about 15 ships together<sup>1</sup>, so that, allowing for the sickness in the enemy's squadron, he was always ready with a handsomely superior force.

Indications of the enemy's approach soon came in. On November 19th the 'Portland' captured a 26-gun frigate, the 'Subtile,' which had put out from Brest to warn the home-coming French of the presence of the Western Squadron. On the 25th, Anson being then N.N.W. about 19 leagues from Ushant, Boscawen chased and captured a vessel which turned out to be the 'Mercure,' d'Anville's hospital ship. It was felt that now the enemy's main body could not be far off; and by December 7th, the date on which Anson had intended to go south, he decided to remain longer in this station, for it seemed impossible that the enemy's arrival could long be delayed. But it was no easy matter to maintain a station close off Brest in December, and notwithstanding all his efforts, his squadron fell off in strength owing to damage aloft and sickness below. Yet he held grimly on until the 22nd December, when, convinced that d'Anville must have steered for a southern port, he reluctantly stood down to Finisterre.

The French had indeed gone south, and got into Rochefort. How close to him they had been Anson did not learn until he met their commander as his prisoner in the following May. "How heartily have I cursed the Dutch," he then wrote to the Duke of Bedford, "who, I find (by their French general, Jonquière) prevented his whole fleet falling into my hands the last winter when he came from Chibatou by one of their vessels informing him he was within twenty leagues of me and must see me the next morning, upon which he altered his course for Rochefort<sup>2</sup>." His dispositions had been absolutely correct. It was to chance, aided by proper care in getting information from neutrals, that the French owed their escape.

The news that the French had got into harbour reached London about December 20th, two days before Anson decided to abandon his station off Brest<sup>3</sup>. It was at once sent off to Anson but failed to find

<sup>1</sup> This was what Martin had wanted to do, but he had never been given enough ships to carry it out.

<sup>2</sup> Barrow, *Life of Anson*.

<sup>3</sup> This news came through the Master of Lloyd's coffee-house, and in a rumour from Rotterdam.

him, and he dropped down to the southward, first to Finisterre and then to Lisbon; scurvy then breaking out among his men, he was obliged to abandon his intention of cruising off Cadiz, and to return to England. He left Boscawen refitting at Lisbon with a squadron to keep a lookout to the southward, and the bulk of his squadron reached the Channel at the end of the month. There it was caught by a violent westerly gale with prodigious thick weather which prevented him from making Plymouth or Portsmouth, and he drove up Channel before it to the Straits of Dover, at last taking his sorely worn-out ships into the Downs on the 6th of February.

Anson's cruise marks the end of the efforts of the French to recover Louisbourg by force of arms. But it will have been seen that it was only indirectly that the strategical distribution of the British fleet had frustrated their intentions. The causes of the escape into the ocean of the fleet and army under d'Anville in the first instance, and of its subsequent return to Brest in safety have been shown. The reasons for the failure of the expedition were threefold. It started too late, its hygiene was defective, and, either by taking a bad course, by indifferent seamanship or by sheer bad luck it was seriously delayed in its passage. "Could they have arrived timely and brought their people in good health I think they would have succeeded without any great resistance," wrote Knowles, "...as, if they had got here in August or before, only five or six guns were mounted to the land [side] and the breach not yet repaired." The place would have been taken before any reinforcement could have reached Cape Breton from England, and there can be no doubt that the weakness of the squadron in home waters seriously endangered Cape Breton and Nova Scotia. If Louisbourg had fallen it is probable that the province of Acadia would have followed suit. Even if the fortress had held out, Nova Scotia would have been in danger, and its ultimate fate would have depended upon whether a sufficient naval and military force could have been sent from England in time. Time, in fact—assuming that both sides were equal in skill and valour—would have been the deciding factor. If the French had once recovered Louisbourg, the methods of the Ministry, as exemplified in the fitting out of Cathcart's and St Clair's expeditions, render it probable that the British campaign of re-conquest would not have been completed before peace was declared in the spring of 1748; its loss would have altered the whole of the conditions of the Peace and the future of Flanders.

The French expedition, notwithstanding its failure to achieve its main object, had served to protect Quebec. Its departure from France detained the British expedition until the season was too far advanced



for operations in Canada. Its sailing broke up the blockade of the St Lawrence and allowed a number of ships to get up the St Lawrence during the summer<sup>1</sup>, besides those victuallers which actually accompanied the fleet. Quebec was thus placed in a good posture to defend itself, and if the British Ministry had resumed their attempt in the following spring a larger force would have been required and a longer and more arduous campaign would have followed.

The Dukes of Newcastle and Bedford were both for resuming the attempt on Quebec as early in the following year as possible. Newcastle's reasons were founded more on political expediency than strategy. "It is my opinion," he wrote to Lord Sandwich on December 23rd,

"that if the expedition is laid aside it may be attended with very bad consequences. The nation is now universally for the war. All parties in Parliament seem to agree in it, and that which has thus united everybody, I am convinced is, their hopes and expectations of keeping Cape Breton, and distressing and making impression upon the French in North America. Should this expedition be laid aside, I am very apprehensive that the nation might think it proceeded from an indifference at least with regard to the conquests in North America, and grow uneasy for that reason at the continuance of the war<sup>2</sup>."

The Committee of Council<sup>3</sup> sat on January 12th, 1747, to decide whether or no the attempt should be renewed and decided against it. "I am very sorry to tell you the Duke of Bedford and I were almost alone," wrote Newcastle, "but what was worst of all Admiral Warren arrives just as the matter was in dispute, and upon his positive opinion, the Duke of Bedford and I were forced to lie aside the thoughts of sending St Clair's expedition when it was represented to be so insufficient by the principal officer who was to execute it, and who must be supposed to know better than anybody we could consult here<sup>4</sup>." Warren, in fact, declared emphatically against the attempt unless at least the force which he and Shirley had recommended in the preceding October were sent. Anything less would give no probability whatever of success; and he doubted whether the numbers could now be raised in time. In view of this unhesitating opinion of the man who had first recommended the expedition and was wholly in favour of its object, who had just come from Louisbourg, and to whom the command was to be given, it was agreed that the thing was impossible and that all that should be done this year was to secure Nova Scotia and Louisbourg.

<sup>1</sup> Governor Shirley to the Admiralty, November 1st, 1746. In letters 3818.

<sup>2</sup> Sandwich Papers. Private Letters of the Duke of Newcastle.

<sup>3</sup> Present: Lord Chancellor, Lord President, Lord Privy Seal, Lord Chamberlain, Duke of Bedford, Lord Chesterfield, H. Pelham and Duke of Newcastle. Sandwich Papers.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Warren's advice as to what action to take is interesting. It was, first, to establish a civil government in Cape Breton, and encourage Protestant settlers; cut off communication with Canada by erecting blockhouses in the passes or by other means; raise a fort capable of holding a garrison of 500 men at Halifax; complete four regiments for the garrison at Louisbourg and send a small expedition to take Crown Point. In each case, he said, use regulars for the garrisons and local troops for the expedition and inland fighting, as they were respectively best suited for those employments,—a reversal it will be observed of the previous intention. Finally, and not least important, he urged building a flotilla on Lake Ontario, superior to the vessels the French had on the Lake, destroying the French vessels and gaining command of that waterway, since it was through Ontario that the French passed to the Mississippi, "having recently established a line of forts encompassing all the English colonies on the continent." To ensure the command, he recommended re-establishing good relations with the Five Nations, who occupied the territory where future fighting would be inevitable. Warren's paper is indeed a remarkably wide and far seeing appreciation of the colonial, military and naval needs of the northern colonies at that time. There are traces in various correspondence that his ideas were partly acted upon, but Braddock's defeat at a later time shows that his opinion of the superiority of the colonial over the regular soldier in forest warfare had not been accepted by the authorities.

Thus the year 1746 came to an end. No great success had attended the arms of the allies in any part, the French merchant fleets were still sailing to the West Indies and back, and an enemy expedition had been able to cross the Atlantic and return without being intercepted. The expedition had failed in its endeavours, but so also had the efforts to destroy it failed. It is impossible, however, not to discern an improvement in the British naval administration, and its disposition of the principal naval forces. The Western Squadron was gradually growing, and owing to that growth, had been able to maintain a station in which, but for the worst of fortune, it would have captured the returning French armada. The great truth that this squadron was the pivot of our naval strategy was now definitely established, and with the acceptance of this canon, success at sea was not to be long in following.

## CHAPTER III

### TRADE PROTECTION AND ATTACK IN THE WEST INDIES, 1746-7

THE command on the Leeward Island station in the beginning of 1746 had been transferred, as we have seen<sup>1</sup>, from Admiral Townsend to Commodore Fitzroy Lee whom we last saw at Antigua. The French had then no strong forces in the West Indies. Macnémara with three ships had gone to leeward escorting a merchant fleet to Hispaniola, and the two men-of-war—'Magnanime' and 'Rubis'—that Townsend had driven ashore had been refloated at Fort Royal, where a merchant fleet of some 40 sail was lying, awaiting an opportunity to proceed to Cape François. Early in February the Commodore received news from a privateer that this fleet was about to leave. He weighed as soon as possible and went to Fort Royal but was too late, for on his arrival he found that the French had already sailed. He accordingly established his ships cruising about Martinique and the adjacent islands, which he declared to be blockaded. "These islands," he wrote, "may in some sort be said to be invested, and in the condition of a place besieged, by our men-of-war and privateers which are continuously cruising about there," and, drawing this analogy, he forbade the entry of any neutrals with provisions<sup>2</sup>, ordering his captains to seize any who attempted to enter, as lawful prize.

The French convoy which had escaped was to go to Cape François to join another fleet under Macnémara and thence, with the strengthened escort, to leave for Europe. Its capture would have been a valuable stroke against France. Lee sent home the news of its sailing by a hired merchant ship, and it was on this information that the Admiralty had instructed Martin to intercept it in the Bay.

Although the necessity for steady cruising was evident, and this incident of missing the convoy emphasised it, Lee did not in the subsequent months maintain a regular service of cruising and relief, and in consequence missed yet a second convoy. Information from the Admiralty, dated March 25th, reached him late in May, acquainting him that a great fleet of merchantmen was about to leave Aix Roads for

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II. ch. x.

<sup>2</sup> Provisions could not be seized, according to our treaty of 1674 with the Dutch except when entering places "investées ou bloquées." Most of the provisions came from the Dutch Islands.

Martinique. Lee, who had two ships<sup>1</sup> out in the approaches on the weather side of the island, got to sea as soon as he could and took up a station 20 leagues to windward of Martinique<sup>2</sup> where he cruised for nearly a month, and when by June 20th he had seen nothing of the enemy he ran to leeward and looked into St Pierre and Fort Royal. There safe under the protection of the batteries lay the whole convoy at anchor. Leaving Aix Roads on April 18th with an escort of the 'Terrible,' 74, 'Neptune,' 58, 'Alcyon,' 50, and 'Gloire,' 46, under the command of Conflans, it had arrived in harbour in the early days of June before Lee had got to windward to intercept it.

The Commodore stood in to the harbour mouth in the hopes of tempting the French Commander to come out and fight, but Conflans was not to be drawn. Lee lay on and off for a short couple of days and then, finding that his provisions were running short, returned to Barbados to revictual from some storeships that had just arrived. No sooner was the harbour mouth clear of British ships on June 22nd than Conflans weighed and sailed for Hispaniola, where he arrived without the loss of a single ship.

These miscarriages of Lee's, involving the escape of two convoys, were due to his omission to maintain squadrons constantly in the local terminal areas of the French trade. Steady cruising within defined limits, off Landfalls in particular, was the only way in which to encounter the enemy whether the object were the attack or defence of trade.

Conflans, however, was not yet clear of the British squadrons. Admiral Davers at Jamaica had also been informed by the Admiralty of the sailing of this fleet and ordered to use his best endeavours to intercept it. But Davers was now in difficulties. After his cruise in the preceding autumn he had been at great pains to get his squadron refitted, and in the spring of 1746 he had sent out a detachment under Mitchell to the windward passage to intercept the homeward bound French trade from Léogane. The trade, however, sailed earlier than had been expected and Mitchell missed it; but he continued cruising off Cape François until the middle of May when shortage of provisions drove him back to Jamaica. His ships were still in harbour in the middle of June when the arrival of the Admiralty letter informed him of Conflans's departure from Aix Roads. They were at once completed for sea, those short of complement were filled up from the flagship, then under refit, and Mitchell was ordered to take them to sea with

<sup>1</sup> 'Dreadnought' and 'Woolwich.' They had been sent out by orders of April 22nd to look out for two French South Sea ships.

<sup>2</sup> He had 'Suffolk,' 'Severne,' 'Sutherland,' 'Gosport' and 'Hampshire' with him.

the utmost despatch to intercept the outcoming French, whose course from Martinique led to the southward of Hispaniola, where Port St Louis was their first post of call; but in spite of this, of the obvious urgency of the service, and of the need on the part of a squadron in such circumstances for tactical freedom of movement, Davers not only attached a large homeward bound convoy to Mitchell's command and ordered him to escort it through the Windward Passage, but also directed him, before proceeding against Conflans, to cruise off Cape François for the trade due to sail thence in June. This confusion between the offensive and defensive function of the squadron was unfortunate and unnecessary. If Conflans were not expected to arrive soon there was not need for so large an escort, for there was no French force in the Mole; if he were, promptitude of action was necessary, and a convoy, while delaying Mitchell's progress could also only hinder him in an attack upon the enemy.

Sailing, thus burdened, on the 15th June, Mitchell beat through the Windward Passage with his whole squadron<sup>1</sup>, and reached the offing of Mole St Nicholas on July 9th where he detached the 'Falmouth' and 'Torrington' with the convoy and then proceeded to cruise as ordered. While he was thus employed Davers, at Jamaica, learned that Conflans, evading Lee had sailed from Martinique on June 22nd for Hispaniola. The Admiral at once sent the 'Drake,' sloop, to order Mitchell to alter his station and cruise between the Grand Anse<sup>2</sup> and Cape St Nicholas in order to intercept the French convoy. The 'Drake' met Mitchell off the Cape on July 26th and gave him Davers's instructions; she was at once detached to look into Port Louis to find out if the enemy had yet arrived there. Two days later, while on her way to Port Louis, she met the enemy's fleet, consisting of 93 sail of merchants escorted by four men-of-war<sup>3</sup>. Conflans, uninterrupted owing to Mitchell's preliminary movement to Cape François had carried his outward bound ships safely into Port Louis, and was now beginning his return journey with the homeward trade. Mitchell had missed the great outward bound fleet.

The 'Drake' hastened northward to Mitchell with this news, having picked up one of the French convoy which straggled from the main body. She met the Commodore between Cape Nicholas and Gonaive on the 1st August, and the British squadron shaped course in the reported direction of the enemy, who was sighted at 3 P.M. on the 3rd August

<sup>1</sup> 'Strafford,' 60, 'Lenox,' 60, 'Plymouth,' 60, 'Worcester,' 60, 'Falmouth,' 50, 'Torrington,' 40, and 'Sea Horse,' 24. This constituted a 'local' escort. The 50 and 40 gun ships formed the 'oceanic' escort.

<sup>2</sup> The large bay between Cape St Nicholas and Cape Tiburon.

<sup>3</sup> 'Terrible,' 74; 'Neptune,' 58; 'Alcyon,' 50; 'Gloire,' 46.

on the lee bow—the wind being about E.N.E., but not very strong. Mitchell stood towards them but did not get near enough to engage before dark. He then called his captains on board and asked their opinion as to whether it were better to engage that night or to wait till the morning. The advice given was to wait till next day, Captain Lawrence of the 'Lenox' making the additional recommendation that the squadron should keep within about two gunshot to windward of the enemy all night to ensure not losing him. In spite of this decision and Lawrence's suggestion, Mitchell tacked to the northward, leaving the enemy a long way to the southward of him; his reason for doing this, he explained at his subsequent court martial, was that as he knew whither the enemy were going it were unnecessary for him to tire his men by keeping close to them and exposing his crews to constant alarms during the night. This breaking of the well-established rule never to lose close touch with the enemy was the means of his losing a favourable situation and was the first cause—apart from the Commodore's own indecision, to which indeed it may be looked on as contributory—for the subsequent deplorable fiasco.

At 6 A.M. on the 4th the enemy bore about S.E. and was from six to nine miles distant. There was a light breeze between east and south during the forenoon and Mitchell, keeping close hauled, slightly improved his position bringing the bearing of the enemy from S.E. to S.S.E. The French picked up a light southerly breeze and brought it along with them; Mitchell, with his squadron heading to the eastward, waited for them with his maintopsail aback. The breeze died down however before the squadrons had closed, and when it came up again at about half-past two in the afternoon it settled down to its true direction—E.N.E. Conflans then hauled his wind, and Mitchell also made sail by the wind. But now doubts and anxieties began to assail him. He feared the enemy was "intending to gain the weather gage" and to fight at a long range at which the heavy 38-pounders of the French would give them an advantage. He therefore sent one of his officers, Lord Bellenden, down the line to ask all the captains whether it would not be best to try and get the wind of the enemy. As so frequently occurred, all the captains gave the answer the Commodore's question invited, and agreed. Mitchell therefore went about and stood to the northward. Conflans, seeing that he had nothing to fear for his convoy, now tacked to the southward to rejoin it.

There were not a few officers who considered that Mitchell had it in his power to engage the enemy that afternoon and that he threw away the chance. At the same time let it be allowed that the gaining of the weather gage was a tactical doctrine much insisted upon, and that

situated as Mitchell was, the French could not get through the Windward Passage without fighting him. He held a secure position which they must force, and he may well have considered that he had no reason to throw away any advantage for the sake of bringing them to action in a hurry.

By 4 o'clock Mitchell had made so much northing that he could fetch to windward of the enemy; he therefore tacked and stood after Conflans till dark, when he called all his captains on board and held a council of war, at which it was agreed to continue to work to get the wind of the enemy, especially "to prevent them from engaging in what manner they pleased": and not to fight a night action. At 11 P.M. he tacked to the northward.

Next morning at daylight the wind was east and the enemy was seen to the S.S.W. about twelve miles distant. Mitchell tacked to the southward, formed line<sup>1</sup> and made all the sail he could towards the enemy, but in ordering Captain Andrews of the 'Worcester' to lead, he could not forbear indulging in his fatal habit of asking for opinions. At 9 o'clock he hailed him and asked whether he thought they should now bear away and engage, to which Andrews replied "the sooner the better." The Commodore therefore ordered him to lead large. Shortly afterwards Conflans went about to the southward. At noon when the French bore S.W., six or seven miles distant, the wind which had been gradually dying away fell altogether, and both squadrons lay becalmed till nearly 3 o'clock. Then a small breeze sprang up, and Mitchell continued to bear down on the enemy, but at the same time he sent Bellenden down the line with a message to Andrews telling him that if he could not get down to the enemy while there were still two clear hour's daylight he wished him to bring to to windward of them. Some mistake seems to have arisen in delivering this message, for on receiving it the 'Worcester' brought to at once, and Bellenden was sent a second time with the message with the addition that he left it to Andrews to carry the squadron down as he thought proper. The 'Worcester' on this made sail again.

In the meantime the 'Drake,' which was some distance to the northward, had been detached at about 2 o'clock to cut off one of the French convoy which had slipped away and now bore N.N.W. Conflans at once sent a light frigate after her, and at 4 o'clock, Mitchell sent the 'Milford' to support the 'Drake.' As the British squadron was now standing towards the enemy and there appeared every hope of bringing them to action if they continued on this course, Mitchell's action in

<sup>1</sup> In the following order: 'Worcester,' 'Lenox,' 'Strafford,' 'Plymouth,' 'Milford.'

detaching one of his more important ships for a trivial duty while he still had the business of beating the enemy excited the greatest surprise, and Captain Rich of the 'Milford' did not hesitate subsequently to say that "some thought he was sent as a pretence to avoid engaging<sup>1</sup>." The result might well be held to justify the suspicion, for about half-an-hour to an hour later, when the 'Milford' had got some two miles to the northward, and the two squadrons were only about three miles apart, Mitchell hailed Captain Dent of the 'Plymouth' and asked him whether it were not now too late to engage. To this Dent replied that it would be if he waited for the 'Milford' to rejoin; and Mitchell, saying that he considered it necessary to wait for her, asked whether it would not therefore be best to bring to for the night and wait to windward till daylight. What Dent replied, or whether he received this message is uncertain<sup>2</sup>; Mitchell asserted that he agreed it was the best course to pursue. But whatever may be the truth, Mitchell hailed the 'Lenox' and told Captain Lawrence it was his and Dent's opinion that there would not now be daylight enough to go down to the French—he made no mention of the condition which Dent made regarding the 'Milford's' rejoining—and that if Lawrence were of the same opinion he should ask Andrews what *he* thought, and if he also agreed, the Commodore would bring to. Such indecision and complete abdication of leadership are fortunately rare.

Without waiting for the replies to his string of leading questions, Mitchell signalled to the 'Worcester' and 'Lenox' to shorten sail and haul to the wind, and immediately afterwards he put the 'Strafford' about and formed line to the northward—the wind had just come to east—followed by the two ships in their stations. Conflans stood a little further to the southward until he could fetch into Mitchell's wake; he then went about and pressing sail began to chase. He must have seen that he had a most half-hearted adversary and resolved to drive him far enough off to ensure the safety of his own convoy for another night.

The 'Milford' and 'Drake' rejoined before dark, and Mitchell redistributed his ships, ordering the 'Lenox' to bring up the rear of the line instead of 'Worcester,' and placing the 'Plymouth' and 'Milford' ahead. He now had his whole force with him, and there still remained about an hour's daylight.

Shortly after the French had gone about, the wind shifted to the southward, with a nice breeze. The enemy came up fast and by 8 o'clock Conflans, who was leading, was up to and engaging the

<sup>1</sup> Evidence of Capt. Rich. Court martial of Com. Mitchell.

<sup>2</sup> Dent said he received no such question and made no reply. Minutes of the court martial on Commodore Mitchell.



'Lenox'; his next astern also got into action with the 'Lenox' which had to sustain the fire of the two French ships unaided, for Mitchell continued under sail and instead of assisting his rear ships, bore up and edged to leeward. This running fight continued until between 9 and 10; after that time Captain Lawrence stated that he never saw the stern lights of the Commodore<sup>1</sup>; Conflans, having made certain that his convoy was safe, and that he had considerably reduced the strength and mobility of the British squadron, bore up and returned to the merchant ships.

Mitchell's squadron was now scattered. When the firing ceased the Commodore hailed the 'Plymouth,' which had kept with him, and asked where the 'Lenox' was; to which Dent replied "Astern of the 'Worcester,' and now on our starboard quarter." Mitchell then brought to, and the 'Plymouth,' which went to find the 'Lenox' picked her up at 1 A.M. some way to the northward, whither she had gone not knowing the Commodore had brought to. At daylight the 'Lenox' rejoined. Her crew felt that they had been shamefully deserted and when the 'Strafford' passed her in the morning the whole ship's company of the 'Lenox' saluted her with three "dumb holloas," followed by three loud cheers for the 'Worcester' who passed immediately afterwards—a demonstration which showed the state of feeling in the squadron.

The day was spent by the British squadron waiting for the 'Lenox' to repair her damages. The French had devoted most of their attention to her spars and both her fore and main masts were shot through and her rigging much cut about, but her losses in men were slight. The French on the other hand were little damaged aloft—what loss they sustained is unknown—and were able to spend the day working to windward.

For the next two days Mitchell tacked between Cape Maize and Cape Nicholas without seeing the enemy; at daylight on the 9th August he caught sight of them again, now dead to windward and a good way off. All day he tacked to endeavour to come up with them. On the morning of the 10th Tortuga was in sight bearing eastwardly, and Mitchell had shortened his distance considerably and nearly come up to the enemy, the 'Strafford' and 'Milford' being to windward of the other three ships. Conflans, who had his squadron well together, bore up and stood down; but Mitchell did not wait for him. He at once dropped to leeward to join the remainder of the squadron, and Conflans, as before,

<sup>1</sup> Lieut. Darroch of the 'Milford' stated he was sent on board 'Strafford' at 10, and was there ordered by Mitchell to put out his light "as he believed the enemy were still following us." Evidence of Lieut. Darroch. Court martial on Mitchell.

hauled his wind again and rejoined his merchant fleet. So the chase continued for four more days, the French Commodore steadily maintaining his position between his charge and the enemy. Then at last at noon on the 13th Mitchell saw the whole convoy sail serenely into Cape François, followed by their escort.

This deplorable exhibition of irresolution and shyness on the part of the British Commodore surely needs no comment. The part played by the French Commander is more interesting. He deserves all the praise he received for the mixture of boldness and skill with which he shepherded his convoy of over 90 sail for ten whole days, mostly in comparatively restricted waters and all the time working to windward. He started with a disadvantageous position; he exposed his convoy to no risks; he made the most of every mistake of Mitchell's. But a criticism which may be invited is that, when he had got his convoy into safety in Cape François, he did not, seeing what a half-hearted antagonist he had to deal with, come out and give him battle and clear the way for his homeward journey. There are, however, arguments why he should not have done so. He had the whole voyage to Europe ahead of him, and even if he defeated Mitchell there were still lions in the path which, with his squadron disabled, might make short work of his convoy. The destruction of Mitchell's squadron would not necessarily clear his way, and he certainly acted in conformity with the doctrine of convoy protection as practised both by the French and ourselves at the time<sup>1</sup>. He lost one ship only in the course of the chase, a straggler which was captured by the 'Drake,' as for Mitchell, he continued cruising for a few days off Cape François till sickness and lack of water after the two months at sea obliged him to return to Port Royal where he anchored on August 19th.

A storm of criticism at once broke out upon his conduct. Davers, though he wrote home saying that he proposed to enquire into the matter, did nothing for two whole months; then, attacked by yellow fever, he died on October 18th, leaving the question untouched. The senior captain on the station, on whom the command devolved, was Mitchell himself. He was well aware of the feeling that existed against him, and in writing to inform the Admiralty that he had assumed the command, he enclosed his journal and those of the other ships which had taken part in the engagement "to vindicate my proceedings for the present against the malicious reflections which I hear have been levelled against me on that occasion." Pending

<sup>1</sup> See *post* p. 63 for the instructions then in vogue in the French navy as regards convoy.

whatever action the Admiralty might take, he continued to direct the operations of the squadron.

The news that the squadron which had sailed from Aix Roads in June under d'Anville was at sea had by now reached Jamaica. Although it was within the bounds of possibility that the French might come south and attack the island, Mitchell did not expect that they could do so at present<sup>1</sup>, nor if they did, that the defence of Port Royal would be a difficult matter, as the narrows could be made secure against a greatly superior force by mooring the squadron broadside on to the entrance. Conflans was reported to have sailed for Europe, after only a ten days' stay at Cape François<sup>2</sup>, and the matter of greatest immediate importance appeared to the Commodore to be the security of the British homeward bound fleet which was due to sail about the 22nd of October. Mitchell therefore made up a strong squadron<sup>3</sup> to escort this trade, sent the 'Plymouth' and 'Merlin' to cruise in the windward passage to clear it of privateers, and the 'Drake' to Port Louis to get information of what French fleets were in that port. It was not, however, till November 29th that he himself sailed, and in the meantime a French outward bound fleet arrived safely in the several ports of Hispaniola. A hundred sail of French merchants now lay inside Cape François and another hundred or so in the bight of Petit Guave and there Mitchell kept them. For two months he cruised about the west end of Hispaniola to the utter distress of the French trade which was unable to move. But in January he could remain at sea no longer with his whole force and leaving the 'Lenox,' 60, and 'Plymouth,' 60, to cruise between Cape Nicholas and the north side of Cuba and the Grand Anse, he carried the remainder of the ships to Jamaica to clean. As the 'Magnanime' and a 36-gun ship at Cape François, and the 'Étoile,' 48, at Port Louis, were the only men-of-war in those parts, and as the ships he had left lay between them Mitchell felt that they "will be a force sufficient to hinder the enemy from joining and at the same time to protect our trade with the northern colonies... Since this station has been well guarded," he continued, "the French privateers have had no success<sup>4</sup>." The blocking up of the enemy's bases was in fact the surest security to the trade.

Mitchell arrived at Port Royal on February 4th and a few days later

<sup>1</sup> Letter of October 19th. Captain's Letters.

<sup>2</sup> He arrived safely at Brest in October, having captured the 'Severne' on October 16th when 30 leagues west by south from the Lizard. The 'Severne' with the 'Woolwich' was escorting trade home from the Leeward Islands.

<sup>3</sup> 'Strafford,' 60; 'Lenox,' 60; 'Cornwall,' 80; 'Worcester,' 60; 'Milford,' 44; and 'Biddeford,' 24.

<sup>4</sup> Captain's Letters. Mitchell, January 28th, 1747.

received news, from a French prize taken by the 'Enterprise,' that another quarry was astir. A fleet of 13 large merchants—both French and Spanish—had sailed from Cadiz on September 22nd under convoy of two men-of-war. He at once sent the 'Milford' to join the detached squadron off Cape François. Digby Dent, who commanded this detached squadron, was joined by the 'Worcester'<sup>1</sup> early in March, and his force was then brought up to three heavy ships. At daylight on March 25th, being then about 20 miles to the W. by N. of Cape Nicholas, he sighted a fleet of ships bearing N.E. and going down before the wind, evidently a French convoy bound for Léogane. Dent let out all reefs and chased, and soon got within about five miles of the fleet; he was able to observe that it was under the escort of three large French men-of-war and a 24-gun ship, which were drawing themselves into a line of battle. These ships were the 'Magnanime,' 74, 'Alcide,' 64, 'Arc-en-Ciel,' 54, and 'Étoile,' commanded by M. du Bois de la Motte. It was the outward bound convoy which had sailed from Cadiz, joined by the 'Magnanime' and 'Étoile' and the trade from Cape François.

The British ships sailed unequally, the 'Lenox' being foul and slow. When the French had rounded "the Platform" the merchant ships made all possible sail and parted company escorted by the 'Étoile,' while the men of war stood towards the British squadron in a defensive attitude with their starboard tacks on board. The two squadrons were now<sup>2</sup> standing towards each other on opposite tacks, the French to windward, the British, led by the 'Worcester' at some distance ahead of the 'Plymouth,' within pistol shot to leeward. When Dent judged that he could fall into place abreast the French squadron he signalled his ships to tack together; but the 'Worcester' in doing so missed stays and sustained a severe raking fire from the whole French squadron. The action that followed took the form of a series of crossing engagements upon opposite tacks—always an inconclusive type of action—in which, when the squadrons had passed each other, they wore and renewed the engagement. The French concentrated their fire principally upon the spars of the British ships, and at 4 P.M. brought down the 'Lenox's' fore topmast, having already severely wounded all her other masts, yards and rigging and sails. Directly de la Motte saw her topmast go away, he bore up, gave over the action and proceeded to join his convoy, satisfied that the British squadron was now disabled from

<sup>1</sup> She had escorted a convoy as far as Cape Tiburon where she joined Dent, and sent the 'Milford' on with the convoy.

<sup>2</sup> The noon bearings were, the Platform E. by N., Cape Nicholas N.N.E. The enemy's squadron bore E. by N.

any further attack upon it; and he proceeded to follow it into safety to Léogane<sup>1</sup>.

The losses of the British squadron were slight<sup>2</sup>, but the 'Lenox' was so shattered aloft that it was necessary for the 'Worcester' to take her in tow. In this way Dent returned to Jamaica. De la Motte admired the conduct of the British ships and wrote to say that Dent had fought his squadron with bravery; his own conduct in the affair must be judged by the principles by which the French at that time governed their convoy system.

When Dent arrived at Port Royal on March 30th, the French homeward bound trade was believed still to be at Cape François, and Mitchell therefore hurried to get his damaged ships ready again, and prepared to sail as soon as they were ready, with a reinforcement of the remaining three of his large ships, to blockade the Cape<sup>3</sup>. The rest of the squadron was employed on the subsidiary services connected with the protection of trade<sup>4</sup>. His sailing was delayed for want of men, for none had been sent out from England to make up for the constant wastage, and by a recent act of Parliament he was not allowed to impress. With difficulty he obtained the consent of the Council of Jamaica to lend him 100 soldiers to strengthen his weakened complements. In giving him this assistance, however, they were careful to lay down that it was in no way to serve as a precedent in case of similar requests in the future.

...“Considering Captain Mitchell's request,” they said, “was to cruise off the French ports and that he would be but a short distance to Windward of the island, and considering that the negroes are at present very peaceable in all parts of the island, [they] advised his Excellency for once, since Captain Mitchell was in such very great want of men, to let him have the soldiers he desired; but at the same time were of opinion that this should be no precedent for the future: that a much greater number of soldiers than were now here would always be necessary for preserving the island from the insurrection and rebellions that might happen from the negroes even in time of peace.”

Here is one of the many examples of the hampering effect of local discontent upon the offensive operations of war.

As soon as he had the men, Mitchell sailed for Cape François, to find as usual that the enemy had departed during the absence of the

<sup>1</sup> This, like Conflans's behaviour, is typical of the French doctrine of convoy defence at that time.

<sup>2</sup> 'Plymouth,' 2 killed, 9 wounded; 'Lenox,' 11 killed, 25 wounded; 'Worcester,' 4 killed, 5 wounded.

<sup>3</sup> 'Strafford,' 60; 'Plymouth,' 60; 'Lenox,' 60; 'Cornwall,' 80; 'Wager,' 24 and 'Worcester,' 60.

<sup>4</sup> 'Biddeford,' 24 and 'Drake,' 14.14—off east end of Jamaica, relieving each other. 'Milford,' 44 and 'Merlin,' 10.14—relieving each other at Ruatan. 'Rye,' 24—sailing with a convoy. 'Enterprise,' 44 and 'Rippon's' prize 20—hove down and refitting.

squadron. After a short cruise he returned to Jamaica where he found awaiting him orders to transfer the command to Dent, who was directed to suspend him and try him by court martial for his conduct in the two actions of December 15th, 1745, and August 6th, 1746<sup>1</sup>. Witnesses were not available until the end of October. Mitchell was acquitted of the charge of misconduct in the action of December 15th as the enemy's squadron was agreed to be much superior to his, and his convoy was at a great distance and in danger of losing company when he broke off the engagement. But the same court tried him next day on the charge relating to his behaviour on August 6th and cashiered him "for that by his misconduct and irresolute behaviour he had brought discredit on his Majesty's arms" and thereby fell under the 12th and 14th articles of war.

The conduct of the British and French Commanders in both of these actions was influenced considerably by their responsibility for their convoys and it is well to appreciate the views of the time as to what conduct an officer in charge of a convoy should observe on meeting an enemy's force. We have already seen that the Captain of the 'Kinsale's' behaviour in the beginning of 1744 when he left his convoy to bring the news of the Brest squadron being at sea was not approved unquestioningly by the Admiralty. In Dent's first action he was held absolved from continuing the action as there was danger of losing company with his convoy; Conflans's tactics were concerned entirely with protecting his charge.

It was the accepted principle that the protection of the shipping under his care was the first and principal object of a convoy Commander. He was not expected to go out of his way, even for the purpose of bringing important information, nor to follow up an enemy, if by so doing he ran any risk of becoming separated from the convoy. He was not expected to destroy an enemy's force if he should meet one, and he was held excused if he broke off an engagement on account of getting out of touch with the merchant vessels. The safe delivery of the convoy at the terminal point of its voyage was always to be his most particular care. If an attack were made by an enemy's squadron, a counter-attack was permissible; but the Commander of the escort should not lose sight of the fact that if he carried his counter-attack too far he might expose himself to defeat or damage which would delay the sailing of his convoy, or cause separation from it. For a convoy the enemy was not only the squadron immediately engaged, but all other hostile ships, King's ships or privateers, in the region through which it had to

<sup>1</sup> The Admiralty orders were dated April 7th, 1747.

pass<sup>1</sup>. And, as the Commander of a garrison of an invested fortress making a sortie attacks a portion only of the beleaguering force, so the squadron Commander would be inflicting punishment on that portion only of the force which immediately threatened his convoy. He would therefore carry his counter-attack so far only as would make him sure of his ability to rejoin the merchant fleet with his ships in a fit condition to keep company with it and protect it during the remainder of that portion of its voyage for which it was committed to his care. Within the limits of sight<sup>2</sup> the distance to which a Commander might pursue were dictated by no formula. It would depend on circumstances, of wind, weather, darkness, the nearness to the end of the journey, the probabilities of other enemy squadrons being in the neighbourhood and the numerous considerations of a like nature which build up any given situation. But it is only when an officer has some principle clearly in view that he can estimate how much these local causes will affect the attainment of his principal object. This seems to have been the doctrine understood by the officers of the time. If the enemy attacked in inferior force he would be driven off and followed up only so far as would allow of the escort's rejoining the convoy. If attacked by superior force it was the first duty of the convoy Commander to provide for the safety of the merchant ships, defending the convoy to the utmost, sacrificing his ships if necessary; or, by leading the enemy away from the convoy and scattering it, secure its immunity by evasion. Once the attention of the enemy had been driven or drawn from the convoy to the escort, the latter occupied the position of any ordinary squadron, and might accept or refuse action according to its chances in an engagement. A sacrifice of the defending escort was not expected unless commensurate gains in assuring the security of the convoy could be attained.

The French convoy orders, which go far towards explaining Conflans's action, were more stringent than the English, both towards the merchant vessels and the men-of-war. Merchant ships were first ordered to rendezvous at the appointed place at a proper time. They were strictly forbidden to sail without convoy under a penalty of 500 livres, besides reduction of the captain or master to the rank of common sailor for one year, which he must serve without pay on board a King's ship. A penalty of 1000 livres, or one year's imprisonment, together with

<sup>1</sup> Thus, de la Motte, who was attacked in the beginning of his voyage in the West Indies on March 25th by Digby Dent was attacked in the Bay of Biscay, at the end of his voyage by a squadron under Captain Fox, and narrowly missed by another under Warren.

<sup>2</sup> Instructions as to convoys, 1746, Art. IV. "All commanders who have merchant ships under their care are strictly forbidden to chase out of sight of their convoys."

being incapacitated from ever commanding a ship again, was imposed on masters who quitted convoy; while if they sailed or separated by orders from their owners, the latter were liable to a fine of 10,000 livres. Commanding officers of convoys were forbidden to quit convoy "on any pretence or occasion whatsoever, under pain of being broke, or of a more considerable punishment according to the gravity of the case<sup>1</sup>." An appreciation of these doctrines enables us more clearly to appraise the tactics of the Commanders in the various engagements.

When Dent and his captains sat down to try Mitchell at Jamaica a great action had just taken place in the Bay of Biscay where l'Étanduère had put into practice the principles of sacrificing everything to the safety of a valuable convoy. The court martial was still sitting on November 29th when the 'Weazel,' sloop, hurried into Port Royal with the news. She had been sent by Hawke after his victorious action of October 14th to warn the Commanders in the West Indies of the escape of the great French convoy with one 64-gun ship only. Dent at once adjourned the court martial and hastily completing the crews of as many vessels as possible by taking the ships companies of the 'Cornwall' and 'Elizabeth,' which were under repair, he sailed to look out for the enemy both north and south of Hispaniola<sup>2</sup>. The northerly winds, however, were so strong that the ships going to the northward did not get off Cape François until December 18th, and reached that part only to be disappointed by the sight of a fleet of merchant ships lying safely in the harbour. Dent then returned to Jamaica where he arrived on January 5th, 1748.

While these events were taking place to leeward there had been a comparatively quiet time where Lee commanded to windward. We left him in the end of June, 1746, returning to Barbados after missing Conflans on his outward bound voyage. As the hurricane season was then approaching, he sent the 'Suffolk,' 'Sutherland' and 'Dreadnought' down off the Spanish main to cruise. The Suffolk was ordered to keep "if possible to windward of La Guayra off the islands of Blanco and St Margaret's, or between them and the French island of Grenada, being in such places as you shall judge most proper to intercept any ships of the enemy that may be going down that coast from Martinique, or coming through the southern passage between Grenada and Tobago, it being the great road which ships take being bound from

<sup>1</sup> French convoy instructions, dated May 14th, 1745. Quoted by a seaman in *The Fool*, December 17th, 1746. B.M. press mark 12352, c. 30.

<sup>2</sup> 'Plymouth,' 'Strafford,' 'Rye' and 'Weazel' the north side. 'Lenox,' 'Worcester,' 'Biddeford' and 'Vainqueur' the south side. The ships were ordered to cruise until January 1st and then return to Port Royal (Captain's Letters, Dent, December 10th, 1747).



Europe to any of the ports in the Spanish West Indies." The other two ships were to cruise off the Spanish main in the track usually taken by the ships of the enemy on their way to Europe. The 'Woolwich' and 'Severne' were ordered to take the homeward bound convoy to Europe, the 'Hampshire' was sent back to her station at Cape Breton, and the remainder of the squadron, small ships mostly, were employed off the islands or put into refit. The whole squadron was to reassemble at Antigua not later than September 1st.

When the squadron rejoined after the hurricane season, Lee sent his small ships out cruising off Martinique but he kept the heavy ships together in a body at Antigua ready to move to any part where they might be required. His force<sup>1</sup> was too small to maintain a constant cruising squadron of sufficient strength to be of service. At the utmost no more than three could have been kept at sea, and such a force would be too small to deal with the convoys arriving at Martinique. When, however, he learned that the Martinique trade was about to sail, he put to sea with his whole force and proceeded to leeward of St Pierre's to intercept it. Leaving Antigua on November 9th he was off Martinique next day, and for the ten following days he lay some leagues to leeward of the island ready to fall upon the convoy if it should put to sea. While he was thus employed another large French merchant fleet consisting of 84 ships under the escort of five men-of-war<sup>2</sup> reached the West Indies in safety. They had sailed from Aix Roads in the middle of September, untouched, because unseen, by the Western Squadron which was cruising in the Bay under Anson. On its arrival in the neighbourhood of Martinique it was again successful in evading the British naval forces, for Lee, with his four ships, was to leeward and had no news of its approach; this was possibly a fortunate escape for Lee, for his squadron was decidedly inferior to the French, but the defence of so large a convoy might have been a difficult matter. As it was the greater part, under three men-of-war, sailed safely into Fort Royal Bay, Martinique, on November 17th, while the remainder, with the 'Magnanime' and 'Étoile' under de la Motte, went on towards Cape François. Lee sighted these ships early on the 18th, and at once chased them. The convoy scattered, and though the British picked up six prizes and got into action with the escorting vessels during the night they were unable to capture any of them. Losing sight of the enemy during the next day, Lee began to beat back to St Kitts in order to cut off the Martinique ships if they should have sailed during his absence.

<sup>1</sup> His heavy ships were four in number: 'Suffolk,' 70; 'Dreadnought,' 60; 'Sutherland,' 50; 'Gosport,' 44.

<sup>2</sup> 'Magnanime,' 74; 'Espérance,' 74; 'Elisabeth,' 66; 'Étoile,' 48; 'Aquilon,' 44.

He reached Basseterre on the 31st and went into harbour, and the very next day as he lay at his anchors, the Martinique convoy was seen from the hills standing to the northward and close to Eustatia. They had got past him.

Lee weighed and hastened to sea, but the enemy had a long start, and though he followed them as far as latitude  $21^{\circ}$  he could not come up with them and was obliged to give up the chase. "This last affair," he wrote, "hath given me great concern as the said convoy is said to be exceedingly rich, and although I was sensible by the intelligence I had that their men-of-war were much superior in force to us, I flatter myself if I could have come to an engagement with them I should at least have made it impossible for them to attend their merchant ships to Europe without refitting."

Thus Lee missed both the outward and homeward convoys. With a squadron of the strength<sup>1</sup> of that under his command it is doubtful whether any disposition of his ships would have ensured the intercepting of either fleet. It was unfortunate that the arrival of the outward fleet coincided with the time he was blockading the homeward one, so that his absence in chase of the former allowed the latter to escape, but if he had fallen in with the outcoming Martinique convoy to windward, he would have been inferior to the French escort even if his whole squadron had been present; his force was, in fact, undeniably weak for the duties it had to perform.

Nothing eventful happened during the remainder of Lee's command, which was brought to an end in the spring of 1747. This abrupt termination was caused through complaints made by the Assembly of Antigua concerning the way in which the Commodore had conducted operations. "The trade has not been protected," ran the charge, "there having been taken in these seas . . . upwards of 170 vessels of his Majesty's trading subjects, some of which have been taken within ten leagues of the islands and even at the mouths of the harbours." This was the gravamen of the accusation; but other charges were made which betray a very bitter feeling against Lee, and also a lack of appreciation on the part of the members of the Council as to the value of their own judgments. They complained that Lee sent ships away to the Spanish main during the hurricane season to cruise there for private profit—a charge which Lee had no difficulty in answering by pointing to his instructions which directed him to employ ships in that manner at that season. They further accused him of lack of diligence because he did not bombard the French ports, an accusation

<sup>1</sup> His squadron consisted of 'Suffolk,' 70; 'Dreadnought,' 60; 'Sutherland,' 50; 'Gosport,' 44; 'Lyme,' 24; 'Richmond,' 20; 'Saxon,' sloop, 16.14.

which needed no serious reply; and they criticised his behaviour in his pursuit of the outward bound convoy, saying that he should have pursued the convoy instead of the men-of-war.

Notwithstanding the preposterous nature of some of these charges, and the fact that during a great part of the period referred to Lee was not in command but acting under Isaac Townsend, such was the influence of the West India merchants that the Admiralty issued an order for his suspension in the end of 1746, and appointed a successor with instructions to try Lee at a court martial on charges to be preferred by the Assembly on his arrival on the station<sup>1</sup>.

This successor, Commodore Legge, whose commission was dated November, 1746, was one of the captains who had started with Anson on his great voyage. His ship, the 'Severne,' suffered greatly in the terrible gales off Tierra del Fuego, and was reduced to such a condition that she was fortunate in being able to get back to Rio de Janeiro. She reached this port in a sadly shattered condition in July, 1741, and thence returned to England. Legge had subsequently received other commands and had been a member of the court martial which tried Admiral Mathews.

Legge's instructions ran as follows:

"You are to employ the said ships either separately or together in such manner as you shall judge best for his Majesty's service, making the security and protection of his Majesty's islands in those seas, and the free navigation to and from thence, the principal point of your care and attention, and in the next place how to annoy the enemy's trade, ships and settlements.

"If you find sufficient encouragement from the Governors of Barbados and the Leeward Islands, and from adventurers, to give you reasonable hopes of success in an attempt to conquer and settle the island of St Lucia, we direct you to advise with and concert measures with the said Governors, the captains of your squadron, and the chief adventurers relating to the making such an attempt, and to proceed upon it if the said measures shall be found proper.

"And whereas it has been proposed by Mr Knowles to make up two fleets of merchant ships in a year at the Leeward Islands and Barbados, one in June and another in August or September, to send home under convoy to England, you are to do so if you find the same agreeable to the times the merchants want convoys for their trade home; but you are to consult and advise with the Governors and Councils of Barbados and the Leeward Islands and to receive their concurrence therein<sup>2</sup>."

On receiving these instructions Legge wrote a letter to the Admiralty which deserves notice, shewing as it does how clearly he realised the degree to which defence is dependent upon offence.

<sup>1</sup> Pocock considered Lee most unjustly accused. Writing to Anson he remarked "I can assure your Lordship that while I was under Mr Lee's command I never knew him behave otherwise than as an officer who had his Majesty's service truly at heart and regarded his private interests as little I dare say as any commanding officer ever did." Pocock to Anson, October 14th, 1747. B.M. Add. MS. 15957. f. 310.

<sup>2</sup> Out letters. Orders and Instructions, 1746.

"I hope their Lordships will not be displeas'd," he wrote, "if after having read the instructions I last received, I venture so far as to offer one point which occurs to me to their Lordships' further consideration, submitting it entirely to their better judgment. The defence of the islands is the first charge given to my care, and the next is the offence of the enemy, which in my opinion is the surest method to secure the first. I am and always have been of opinion that the island of Barbados, should the enemy make an attempt upon it on their way to Martinique with one of their convoys, would fall without great difficulty a prey to them; adding to their common force only two old regiments of foot to land, the town neither could nor would be long disputed and of consequence the island must soon after submit or be ruined. If they should divide their soldiers equally among their merchant ships they would not amount to more than 25 men for each ship, which is no great matter where they always carry from 50 to 100 for their own equipage. They would have no occasion for transports and the designs would be the better concealed. This is not what I would pretend to say they will do, but I am satisfied from what I know of the place, its situation and defence, it is what they may do; and if it was done I don't think would be easily remedied: therefore, if possible, to be prevented. The means which I should offer would be to meet and attack their convoy in the sea, which would certainly disconcert their schemes and if successful would in great measure ruin the only advantageous trade they have left: and, if defeated to windward, their trade to San Dominique would be as effectually ruined as to Martinico, no alarms could be given to Jamaica, and the cruisers from thence would prevent any of their trade from getting into Port Louis, Leogan or Cape François....If we attack them to windward," he concluded, "I don't see anything can be apprehended from them to leeward<sup>1</sup>."

Thus Legge pointed out that by attacking the enemy at sea at the earliest moment after his arrival within the sphere of operations we should defend our own possessions and might ruin the enemy's trade; but he drew attention at the same time to the probability that in view of the danger to which the enemy's trade was now exposed, they would increase the strength of their convoys, and that we should calculate upon their having at least six sail of the line and a frigate with the convoy before it separated at Martinique. To put the proposed principle into operation he suggested that he would need an addition to his squadron. The Admiralty evidently agreed with his views, for the 'Captain,' 70, was added to his force, bringing the total to six sail of the line, three heavy frigates (44's) and six smaller craft<sup>2</sup>.

Legge sailed from home on January 4th, 1747, with the 'Captain,' 'Sunderland,' 'Dragon' and a convoy of 44 sail of merchants. After clearing the Bay, he had the good fortune to fall in with some scattered ships of the French Martinique convoy which he captured and carried into Lisbon for disposal; after which he resumed his voyage and arrived

<sup>1</sup> Captain's Letters, November 18th, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> 'Suffolk' ... 70	'Mary,' galley 44	'Centaur' ... .. 24
'Captain' ... 70	'Ludlow Castle' 44	'Lyme' ... .. 24
'Dreadnought' 60	'Gosport' ... 44	'Richmond' ... .. 20
'Dragon' ... 60		'Dreadnought's' prize 12. 14
'Sunderland' 60		'Porcupine' ... .. 10. 14
'Sutherland' 50		'Saxon' ... .. 16. 14

at Barbados on April 14th. From Barbados he went to Antigua, where he gave Lee the orders for suspension, and then informed the Governor of the Admiralty's instructions with respect to Lee's trial. The Council, though ready to denounce the Commodore in general terms, were unable or unwilling to put their charges to the open trial of a court martial, and after months of shuffling and an abundance of legal quibbles, it was found impossible to frame a case against Lee, who returned to England untried and still under suspension. His case was investigated at home by a court martial. It broke up however without pronouncing a decision, and in February, 1748, the suspension was removed and he was restored to his rank.

Legge, so soon as he had time to look round and take in the general aspects of the employments of the squadron, began to set about organising the local strategy on a more systematic basis. He drew up a "General plan for operations" for the squadron which he forwarded to the Admiralty, of which the full text was as follows:

*General Plan of operations for the squadron of his Majesty's Fleet under my command stationed at Barbados and the Leeward Islands.*

1. To protect the Trade coming to and going from the Colonies.
2. To protect the Colonies from any insults from the enemy.
3. To distress and annoy the enemy.

(1) To protect the trade, station some ships in the track the trade most probably will come down in.

Divide those ships in such manner that while attention is given to one part all the rest may not be neglected.

Listen to nobody in particular but attend to the whole in general. The individuals will only tell their private interest, and pretend it is the interest of the public, or give their opinions upon the whole when they are acquainted with but one of its parts, and that partially, as has sufficiently appeared already.

Send convoys with the fleets quite home and with any considerable number of the northward trade and runners as far as the latitude of  $21^{\circ}$  till clear of the stations of the privateers. Fix certain days for the convoys to sail from Barbados and collect the fleet as they pass the Leeward Islands, and abide punctually by the time to avoid the deceitful reports that are artfully spread to the great prejudice of the credulous.

(2) To protect the colonies keep the enemy under apprehensions at home and consequently employed and upon their guard.

Rendezvous the strongest parts of the force where it can most speedily and easily attend to the relief and assistance of every part of the station.

- (3) To distress and annoy the enemy:

Send such prisoners to Great Britain as are officers, pilots, natives, married and settled upon the enemy's colonies and have families there, as this will deter them from going a-privateering any more and deter others, for want of which the privateersmen are no sooner returned but they are out at sea again and some of them have been taken seven or eight times during the war.

Recommend to their Lordships to put a stop to the Dutch supplying them with the provisions of Ireland and his Majesty's northern colonies of America from Eustatia, and they cannot possibly subsist, especially when the privateering trade is over, without being absolutely dependent upon us.

Also to stop their sugars being carried from their islands in small Dutch vessels to Eustatia and thence sent to Europe.

Endeavour to prevent the contraband trade carried on between his Majesty's colonies and the enemy in Dutch bottoms.

Cruise twice a year with a strong squadron to intercept their outward bound convoys.

Never send flags of truce without a King's officer; and at least to carry So men to prevent the frequency of them and put a stop to the correspondence, smuggling trade and intelligence carried on by the means of them.

That the small ships and sloops be divided as nearly equal as possible, one half to cruise for the protection of the leeward Caribbee Islands, as in my instructions to Captain Tyrrell, the other half to cruise for the protection of Barbados as in my instructions to Captain Swanton.

A ship to cruise to the northward of Anguille and St Bartholomew to protect the trade from North America, excepting in the hurricane seasons and when the whole of the squadron cruises together.

The whole squadron excepting the small ships or sloops to cruise together part of May and June, and the great ships to go down to the Spanish main July, August and September. The whole squadron to cruise together again in November and part of December. That it be recommended at home to all the trade bound to Jamaica if they sail the end of May or beginning of June from Great Britain to make the island of Barbados and run down the Spanish main which will be guarded at that season and where they will be secure from hurricanes: and that this instruction be kept as secret as possible.

That it be recommended at home to avoid making Deseada at any time where the privateers always lurk and are safe; but that they endeavour to make Antigua at once.

That during the intervals of times that the ships [which] are destined to cruise together are cleaning, they be either separately or jointly employed to defend his Majesty's subjects and annoy his enemies as occasions shall offer and circumstances require.

That it be recommended to their Lordships that the convoy from Europe never sail later than the middle of February [or?] as much sooner as they think proper, but if it sails later there will not be time after their arrival here to get their sugars on board which will disappoint the convoy and break through all the regulations agreed upon, and subject us to very great inconveniences in this part of the world.

That the convoy sail punctually from Barbados on the 24th of June and 29th of September.

The Dragon and Sunderland to clean in October and April.

The Captain and Sutherland the end of January and beginning of February.

The Dreadnought the end of December and beginning of January.

The Ludlow Castle and Mary Galley in June and September: the single bottom ships and vessels as often as can conveniently be.

Avoid ever sending more ships to clean than two at a time and take care that none of them interfere with one another and if possible, to send none to clean in the hurricane months because of the sickness and rains."

Legge thus appears to have begun to establish a regular and systematic rotation of cleaning his ships and cruising. The French convoys were expected soon after his arrival and he took the main body of his squadron<sup>1</sup>, consisting of seven large ships—a number sufficient to give him a superiority over the six and a frigate which he expected would be the size of the escorting force—and cruised to windward of Martinique with his small ships scattered, three to windward and three to

<sup>1</sup> 'Captain,' 70; 'Suffolk,' 70; 'Sunderland,' 60; 'Dreadnought,' 60; 'Dragon,' 60; 'Sutherland,' 50; 'Gosport,' 44.

leeward of Barbados to protect trade, and to pick up any stragglers from the main fleet of the enemy. No great fleet, however, arrived—Anson was cruising in the Bay—and by June 24th Legge called in all his cruisers in order to give them time to refit before the hurricane season. Ten prizes only were taken between February and the end of July, a number which gives an indication of the distress to which the French were now reduced at sea.

In August Legge fell ill and was obliged to go ashore at Barbados to recover his health, transferring the command to the senior captain, George Pocock. His career of promise was not destined to fulfilment; on September 18th he died.

Pocock, however, who is best known as the naval commander who fought d'Aché so stoutly, and conducted the great expedition to Havana in the Seven Years' War, was a worthy successor to Legge, and continued his practice of steady and systematic cruising with an organised rotation of reliefs. So soon as the hurricane season was over, he resumed the station off Martinique. Five large East India ships<sup>1</sup> were reported to have put into Fort Royal on their passage home, and these he proceeded steadily to watch for by means of his squadron of four ships cruising to leeward and in sight of the island. Early in November news reached him that a great convoy was expected soon to arrive from France<sup>2</sup>, and he thereupon transferred his squadron to the weather side of the island in order to intercept it, at the same time sending orders by the 'Porcupine' sloop to all of his outlying ships of force<sup>3</sup> to join him. The report had stated that the convoy was protected by ten men-of-war, which meant that a strong force was needed to deal with it, but his reinforcement had not yet reached him when on November 21st the sloop 'Weazel' brought him the letter from Hawke informing him of the action with l'Étandière, the capture of all the men-of-war except one, and the escape of the merchant ships; and if Pocock thought the convoy might be going to Dominica the letter gave him permission to send on the 'Weazel' to inform Knowles at Jamaica. This Pocock did.

Having no need to keep together after their escort was destroyed, the French merchant ships had made a good passage. The first of them

<sup>1</sup> 'Achille,' 74; 'Penthièvre,' 36; 'Argonaute,' 36; 'Balène,' 36; 'St Malo,' 20. La Bourdonnais was in the 'Achille.' He had left India with twelve sail which became separated in a gale. He transferred his wife and children, who were with him when he left, to a Portuguese vessel for safety on the passage, and when he found himself blockaded in Fort Royal he slipped over to Eustatia, where he embarked on board a Dutch vessel and took passage to Europe, but eventually was taken prisoner at Falmouth.

<sup>2</sup> Captain's Letters. Pocock, November 9th, 1747.

<sup>3</sup> 'Sutherland,' 50; 'Sunderland,' 60; 'Mary,' galley, 44.

came in sight the very morning after the 'Weazel's' arrival and others continued to drop in during the eight days following. The British squadron was fully employed in chasing and capturing them, but was hampered by the ships from to leeward not having yet got up to the weather station. Pocock with his four ships took twenty-one prizes, the 'Sunderland' on her way to join him took four more, the 'Sutherland' took one but losing her foretopmast missed the opportunity of many more captures, the 'Mary,' galley, took one, and a few more were taken by the smaller ships, while the local privateers added another ten to the tale. The ships bound to San Domingo escaped the holocaust through keeping to northward of the island in company with the 64-gun ship which had escaped from the action, but of those bound to the Leeward Islands some 40 prizes in all were taken. Sixty-six ships got safely into Martinique, but notwithstanding this the blow was a terrible one to the island. For the moment the inhabitants were rescued from the imminent danger of starvation, but the losses raised insurance premiums to such a height that not another vessel would sail. An intercepted letter from Martinique dated December  $\frac{19}{30}$ , which was found by Captain Hugh Pigot on board a prize that made the attempt to get away, gave a picture of the situation.

"We are here an hundred vessels ready for sailing," wrote the correspondent, "and only wait for convoy which we expect with impatience having been here fourteen months. We intend to go all alone next month if no man-of-war comes. As to what regards the trade of this island, it is very melancholy, and if it were not for the thirty-six privateers I doubt but we should have had a famine and the island been in a miserable condition from the long time that passed before those ships arrived to assist us, of which only sixty-six are got into different ports of the island, while twenty-one<sup>1</sup> are taken and carried to Antigua. This is very unfortunate for us."

Pocock remained cruising to windward until no more ships came in, and then proceeded to Barbados to dispose of his prizes. He had now about 900 prisoners in his hands. The loss of these men was a very real blow to France, for not only did it deprive the East India ships which lay at Fort Royal of the crews they badly needed to enable them to sail, but it also went a long way towards preventing the French in Martinique from fitting out privateers, which besides preying upon British trade brought in supplies to the straitened island. The detention of this large number of French seamen was thus a highly important factor in the protection of West Indian commerce. Yet although the intelligent men who composed the Assembly of Barbados must without doubt have recognised this, their judgment would appear to have been so warped by immediate considerations of expense that

<sup>1</sup> The remainder taken by Pocock's squadron were bound to other islands.



when the question of internment of the prisoners was put before them, they would agree to providing prison accommodation, food and guards for a period of six weeks only<sup>1</sup>. It is not difficult to appreciate the impatience with which the Commodore received this decision. His predecessors had been, and he still was, constantly exposed to the effects of denunciations from the merchants for any supposed neglect in the protection of trade. Ogle, Davers and Lee had all been the objects of their attacks. Yet now, when he had struck a blow which must tend greatly to prejudice the operations of the enemy's privateers, these very merchants proposed to render his success partly nugatory by setting free the prisoners within the short space of six weeks. Pocock wrote home, therefore, urging that some troops might be sent out to be stationed in the island who should serve to guard prisoners of war, so that "his Majesty's service would not be obstructed in time of war by difficulties which at no time ought to be made by any of his Majesty's subjects."

The Commodore, while he deplored the action taken by the Assembly was nevertheless not blind to their point of view. The cost of imprisoning these seamen of the enemy was at the rate of £9000 a year, a sum which he characterised as an "insupportable burthen" upon the small colony; nor did the Home Government expect the colonies to take upon themselves such expenses arising from the war. The expenditure, for instance, which had been incurred by the northern colonies in the expeditions to Cartagena, Santiago and Louisbourg was all repaid to the Colonial Governments, though the cost of actual local defences would appear to have been borne by the colonies themselves. Moreover, though on more than one occasion the colonies may appear to have shown a parsimonious spirit in expecting repayment for all and every service rendered by them beyond their own coast lines, it must be remembered that they were still very poor, and that in sending their men to take part in the oversea operations they contributed far more than the money repayments represented, for the men were withdrawn from the economic development of the country, to which only too many of them never returned. The loss of men was more serious to the young settlements than it was to the home country. Barbados, however, had suffered little in this way; and although the war had cost her large sums in fortifying her coasts and in loss of trade, it would have been expedient on her part to pay more, and keep these men, rather than let them loose once more to prey upon her shipping.

<sup>1</sup> Pocock only just arrived in time to prevent the Assembly from sending all these prisoners straight back to Martinique! Pocock to Anson, January 12th, 1747. B.M., Add. MS. 15957, f. 311.

Having disposed of his prisoners and prizes, Pocock resumed his active cruising with the least delay possible on the same stations as before, keeping a particular watch upon St Pierre's and Fort Royal in order to prevent any ships from sailing and to distress the island of Martinique to the utmost extent in the hopes of forcing it to surrender.

On December 28th Admiral Charles Knowles arrived at Barbados from Boston and sent a message announcing the fact to Pocock, with an expression of his congratulations at the pleasing sight that met his eye when he entered Carlisle Bay and found it full of the Commodore's prizes. Pocock replied at once, informing him of his intended activities, and Knowles hastened to join him. True to his principles of attacking the enemy's possessions, Knowles characteristically proposed to endeavour at once to capture one of the French islands, and suggested taking the combined fleet to Grenada with that object. But the Commodore, while agreeing that Grenada would be a valuable acquisition to the Crown, declined to take his squadron away from the blockade of Martinique; nor can it be doubted that in this his judgment was correct. The loss of Grenada would have done nothing towards bringing the war to an end; the strangling of French trade was producing a direct effect upon the capacity of France to continue the war, and Martinique was one of the ganglions of that trade. Knowles immediately fell in with Pocock's views, but his impatient nature could not bear the tedious method of blockade, and he suggested taking active measures against the Martinique shipping by endeavouring to destroy it in harbour. He therefore went close in himself to reconnoitre and see whether this were practicable; but an examination of the batteries defending Fort Royal shewed him that the place was too strongly defended for such an operation to have any promise of success. As there was now no need for a greater force in those parts than that under Pocock he parted company and carried his squadron down to its appointed station at Jamaica, having first provided the Commodore with all the stores he could possibly spare to enable him to keep the sea as long as possible.

The war with France was now drawing to its weary close. The victories of Anson and Hawke in home waters (to be described hereafter) had destroyed whatever hopes the French may have had of convoying their trade. The local command in the Leeward Islands was disputed only by privateers, and to deal with them the West Indian squadron was now distributed as follows:

Cruising off Martinique: 'Dragon,' 60; 'Sunderland,' 60; 'Rippon,' 54; 'Mary,' galley, 44; 'Sutherland,' 50.

Repairing and cleaning: 'Captain,' 70.

Off Barbados: 'Ludlow Castle,' 44<sup>1</sup>; 'Richmond,' 20.

To windward of Barbuda and Deseada for protection of trade to Montserrat, Nevis and St Kitts: 'Poole,' 44<sup>1</sup>; 'Centaur,' 24; 'Dreadnought's' prize, 12. 14.

Between St Martin, St Bartholomew and Barbuda: 'Dreadnought,' 60.

Between St Kitts and Montserrat: 'Speedwell,' sloop, 10. 14.

The French shipping, now unable to get convoy, attempted to run home singly; but it met with only indifferent success, for Pocock had a force sufficient to work in reliefs and to scatter on the lines of passage; the escape therefore even of single ships became a very difficult matter.

In May Admiral Henry Osborn arrived to take over the command in succession to Legge, but the war was then in its last month. In June orders came to cease hostilities with France, and as there was then no further need for a large squadron in the Leeward Islands the majority of the ships returned to England, a force superior to that of the enemy being retained permanently on the station.

The general lines upon which the campaigns in the West Indies were conducted during this war, and the success or failure of the measures, both English and French, will, it is hoped, have been made sufficiently clear in the preceding narrative. One point, however, is deserving of special attention—the small measure of cooperation between the naval officers and the local authorities.

This is perhaps one of the least satisfactory features of the several campaigns. The correspondence of the Admirals and Colonial Governors shews a constant current of friction between the naval commanders and the Governors, Assemblies, law officers, planters and merchants. Nor, considering the many conflicting interests, should this be a matter of wonder, unless we should expect in an essentially mercantile age a high outlook or a spirit of self-abnegation. Each had some personal interest at stake, and this interest, human nature being what it is, too often determined his course of conduct. Governor Trelawney was ambitious to prescribe the course of operations, other Governors and their Assemblies had such purely local views that the naval operations were hampered for lack of men or money, or by jealousy between the several islands. The many references to the local difficulties shew how real these were, and what lack of cordiality resulted between the representatives of the navy and the colonies, and how unfavourable were such conditions to a thoroughly efficient prosecution of the war.

The way in which the colonial lawyers winked at illicit trading was a special source of restriction to the navy in doing its work. Davers suffered from this at Jamaica, and in the Leeward Islands things were no better. The Dutch Governors constantly supplied

<sup>1</sup> These ships had come across from the African coast to join the Leeward Islands squadron—an occasional practice.

the blockaded French islands with provisions, warlike stores and cordage for fitting out their privateers, but when Dutch ships were taken they were nearly always acquitted by the local courts, while if a condemnation were secured an appeal for a trial in England would be lodged which was usually beyond the pecuniary powers of the captors to meet. The colonial laws did not permit the stores and provisions to be brought into the islands and sold there, so that the officers could not buy the stores themselves and re-sell them. Thus a captor was likely to be at a great loss on taking a prize, "which makes our officers very cautious of having to do with them," said Lee. Commodore Legge expressed himself with even greater force. "It is impossible to represent to their Lordships the extreme difficulties which attend the carrying on his Majesty's service upon this station, and it seems to me to require an artful casuist rather than an able or faithful servant, as he must always be, defending himself or constantly upon his trial whether he acts right or wrong, and if he would not be condemned must disengage the truth from the multitude of fallacies with which it is concealed and show in what manner the things as well as himself are misrepresented<sup>1</sup>." It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the attitude of the lawyers, planters and Assemblies was dictated rather by a regard for their own immediate and personal advantages than by any higher motive. Pocock, writing to Anson voiced the same complaint. "What a troublesome set of people," he said, "we had to deal with, never satisfied, and seem to choose contention rather than carry on his Majesty's service in harmony with his officers. Sir Peter Warren and Mr Knowles know them perfectly and I am informed were not well treated in their time<sup>2</sup>." Davers's attempts to put down the contraband trade were prevented by the action of the Attorney-General of Jamaica. Thus, a British ship carrying, among other things, canvas and tallow to Léogane was captured and put into the Prize Court by the Admiral, who pointed out that those particular stores were of value to an enemy for fitting out ships. The Attorney-General, however, argued that the declaration, which ordered British ships not to carry, "soldiers, arms, powder, ammunition or other contraband goods to any of the territories of the French King," had not been contravened. Tallow and canvas, said the law officer, might possibly have been contraband from particular circumstances, "as, if any ships of war were then at Léogane incapable for the sea for want of such a quantity of tallow and canvas, or by such a supply rendered serviceable; but if there were no such circumstances to determine their use I appre-

<sup>1</sup> Captain's Letters. Legge, August 5th, 1747.

<sup>2</sup> Pocock to Anson, October 14th, 1747. B.M. Add. MS. 15957, f. 310.

hend they don't fall under the class of contraband." Hindered by such sophistries as this, the British powers at sea were crippled and the enemy received supplies of all kinds, much of it carried in British bottoms. Provisions came from Cork, timber and hemp from the Baltic. St Eustatius was the principal depôt, and there the storehouses were full of the property of merchants, British, Colonial and Dutch, for sale to the enemy; yet these same merchants were abusing the British commanders for insufficiently protecting their trade, and the law officers were framing the indictments against them. Small wonder that the fleet rejoiced when Rodney took the island in 1781 and sold the contents of the storehouses under the hammer.

The backwardness of the planters themselves to assist by furnishing negroes for transport work was another manifestation of the selfish spirit which obtained. The failure of the expedition to Panama in the end of 1741 was largely caused by the refusal to permit negro labour to leave the island. The aid afforded to Commodore Mitchell in the way of reinforcing his crews was only grudgingly given, and with a scrupulous addendum that the action was in no way to serve as a precedent. At a later date the episode of Brimstone Hill furnishes a yet more sinister example of a selfish attitude; Nelson's well known difficulties in his time afford a manifestation of the same spirit. It is not to be wondered that the station had a bad name among commanders, and that in 1796 we find Cornwallis writing to Lord Spencer in terms which might have been used, *ceteris paribus*, by his predecessors of the war of the Austrian Succession: "I never did, my Lord," he wrote, "express a desire to go to the Leeward Islands considering from the number of them and jarring interests, that it was always a station where an officer, instead of gaining credit was likely to lose any little reputation he might have acquired. I hardly know an instance where it has happened otherwise except in the case of Lord Rodney and that only the last time he was there; but he was a particularly 'fortunate man'".

Such lessons as are to be drawn from the West Indian operations are thus not only confined to seamen. They are of wider application and deserve the consideration of statesmen on shore as well as of officers at sea.

<sup>1</sup> Cornwallis to Lord Spencer, February 8th, 1796. N.R.S. vol. XLVI. pp. 210-11.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE WESTERN SQUADRON, 1747

THE prodigious exertions made by Anson in his attempt to intercept the French in the winter of 1746-7 brought his ships and crews to a state of exhaustion—the inevitable result of such exceptional efforts. Notwithstanding the endeavours he made to get the squadron refitted as fast as possible it was not until April that a sufficient squadron was again ready to act offensively against the enemy. The seas were not, however, left without some guardians to our trade.

Before his return to the Downs in February, Anson had made arrangements to provide cruisers for trade attack and protection while his main body would be repairing. Boscawen's squadron<sup>1</sup> had been left at Lisbon to refit as quickly as practicable, and then come up to the Soundings to cruise; Charles Watson, with five ships and a sloop<sup>2</sup>, was stationed off Finisterre, with instructions to return to England by the 20th February unless news should be received of enemy men-of-war or convoys, in which case he could remain out till the end of the month; and the 'Monmouth,' 70, and 'Salisbury,' 50, had been ordered by him to cruise 60 leagues to the westward of Scilly, between latitudes 48° 30' and 49° 30', for the protection of trade, remaining out as long as their provisions would last. In each set of instructions Anson inserted the following clause: "But though your station is limited as above, if you get any information of the enemy's ships of war, trade or privateers without the bounds of your station, you are at liberty to go yourself with all or any part of the ships, or to send such of them as you shall think proper in quest of the ships of war, trade or privateers, using your utmost endeavours to take or destroy them." This clause will be recognised as being similar to the standing instructions issued to cruisers in the Soundings.

A fortnight after Anson's arrival in the Downs advices were sent to him from the Admiralty to the effect that the French Martinique trade was on its way home, escorted by three men-of-war. He at once ordered Captain Savage Mostyn to sea with a squadron of four ships and a

<sup>1</sup> 'Namur,' 74; 'Bristol,' 50; 'Hector,' 44; 'Amazon,' 24.

<sup>2</sup> 'Princess Louisa,' 60; 'Edinburgh,' 70; 'Eagle,' 60; 'Nottingham,' 60; 'Lyon,' 60 and 'Weazel.'

frigate<sup>1</sup>, with instructions to cruise between latitudes 46° and 47° 30', making Belleisle and the Penmarks when the weather was clear, "as it will be a proper place to intercept the enemy's ships as well to discover the motions and get intelligence of the ships in the Port of Brest." Mostyn was ordered to cruise in these parts for 30 days; he was to send a cutter into Brest at once, and any news of importance was to be transmitted without delay to the Commander-in-Chief. The extra precaution of sending it in duplicate by two sloops was added.

With these instructions Mostyn put to sea on March 3rd. It was not long before he picked up some news, for on the second day out he captured a small French vessel—'le Comte de Lowendahl'—from whose master he learned that 20 sail of the line were in Brest, that the port was full of seamen, and that four men-of-war and six East India ships were going to sail for the East as soon as possible. Mostyn at once closed in on Brest and kept the land in sight for ten days, but without getting any further news. Being then joined by a cutter, the 'Charlton,' he sent her on the 15th March to examine Brest water, and dropped down the coast himself to his station to the westward of Belleisle, where the cutter was to rejoin him. Three days later, on March 18th, being then off the Penmarks, he sighted a fleet to the southward, and on closing them made them out to be 18 sail of French ships. As the British squadron drew towards the enemy, the French formed to receive them, eight of the largest ships which appeared to be of from 74 to 50 guns drawing into a line of battle, with two 40-gun ships out of the line, and the remainder, which looked like East Indiamen, on the further side of them.

Seeing the formidable squadron to which he was opposed, Mostyn called a council of war. The 'Monmouth' had not yet joined him and his force consisted only of the 'Hampton Court,' 70, 'Falkland,' 50, 'Ambuscade,' 40, 'Syren,'<sup>2</sup> 24, and 'Inverness,' 24. He put the question to his captains "whether it is possible with our strength to attack the fleet of 18 sail to leeward," and to this an unanimous reply of "No" was given. In reply to a further question as to what should be done, it was agreed to send the news that this large squadron was at sea to the nearest British port with the least possible delay. The 'Inverness' was therefore despatched with the information.

The squadron with which Mostyn had fallen in was one of great importance. India was concerned in its fate. The British squadron in

<sup>1</sup> 'Hampton Court,' 70; 'Prince Frederick,' 64; 'Falkland,' 50, and 'Ambuscade,' 40; the 'Monmouth,' 70, was ordered to join him in the Soundings. Anson's Instructions. In letters, February 21st, 1747.

<sup>2</sup> Had joined him on the 9th. Her captain was Hon. John Byron.

the Indian ocean had for some time been supreme in those waters, and the French position on the Coromandel coast was monthly becoming more serious. Trade was unable to move and the settlements themselves were suffering severely for want of money, stores and reinforcements. The French East India Company after many disappointments had at last obtained from King Louis the services of three men-of-war to escort a fleet carrying money and supplies; and it was this fleet, under the command of the Chevalier Grout de Saint-Georges, which having left l'Orient on March 16th, had been sighted by Mostyn two days later.

Although the French fleet appeared very formidable, it was in reality far less strong than it seemed to the observers on board the British ships. East Indiamen were tall ships and had much the appearance of men-of-war of the line, and of the eight vessels which Mostyn saw drawing into line, three only were men-of-war, the other five being the largest merchantmen<sup>1</sup>. Thus Mostyn was mistaken, but the mistake was not an unnatural one; a frigate which sighted the same fleet a day or two later made a nearly identical report, being similarly deceived by the size of the East India ships<sup>2</sup>.

Mostyn continued cruising off Belleisle until March 25th, when he was joined by the 'Ferret' privateer, which brought him news that a still larger French fleet was out; and on the same day the 'Monmouth,' 'Prince Frederick' and a prize joined him. In consideration of the great strength the enemy now had at sea, the officers decided that it was injudicious to remain out and run the risk of being taken, while at the same time their ships would be needed to make up the squadron which would be preparing at home. Mostyn therefore detached the 'Ambuscade' to make a reconnaissance down the coast and get the latest news; and with his squadron stood for Plymouth where he anchored on the 27th and made his report.

The French squadron was unfortunate. At daylight on the 28th Mountagu in the 'Ambuscade' sighted them. It was blowing a hard gale with thick weather and before he saw where he was Mountagu was close on board the 'Auguste,' a 34-gun ship. He unhesitatingly

<sup>1</sup> The fleet consisted of the following:

*King's ships.* 'Invincible,' 74; 'Lys,' 64; 'Jason,' 32.

*Company ships.* 'Auguste,' 34; 'Prince,' 34; 'Apollon,' 30; 'Aimable,' 30; 'Futoy,' 30; 'Légère,' 22; 'Chasseur,' 12.

*Private merchant ships.* 'Vigilant,' 22; 'Lyon,' 20; 'Thétis,' 20; 'Modeste,' 22; 'Dartmouth,' 18; 'St Antoine,' 20, and two others.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Philip Patton's remarks on reconnaissance are apposite to this case. "At all events, and in almost all cases, therefore a captain's duty seems to require him to go sufficiently near to any ships to form a clear and accurate judgment of their size and force."



engaged her in spite of the close presence of the other ships, and fought her for two hours, the weather so bad that both ships were under courses only. Two large French ships which then fetched up to the combatants obliged Mountagu to haul off; he was pursued by the great ships for several hours, but succeeded in escaping, disappointed at his ill fortune. "I should certainly have brought her to Plymouth," he wrote, "had not the men-of-war interrupted, but as it is I flatter myself I have spoiled her voyage as she was much disabled." He had indeed spoiled the 'Auguste's' voyage. She was so shattered that the gale finished what the 'Ambuscade' had begun; and although she attempted to struggle back to harbour, she sank before reaching safety. The rest of the squadron suffered aloft from the gale and was greatly crippled. The 'Légère' capsized, the 'Chasseur' was wrecked, and the remaining ships were so damaged that, unable to continue their voyage they were obliged to put in to Aix Roads. Three ships only went on—the 'Lys,' 'Aimable' and 'Futoy'; these, under Bouvet de Lozier, crossed to Brazil and, in the end, were the only vessels that reached India.

The news that the East India fleet had been sighted by British cruisers, and that an express had been sent to London with the news, leaked over to Paris and caused the French East India Company great anxiety. They wrote to St Georges to hasten him to sea again directly they heard he had put into Aix Roads. There was no doubt in their minds that a British squadron would promptly be sent to intercept him, and St Georges was therefore told that no delay was to be incurred—with one proviso. Another fleet of twenty ships with a convoy of four men-of-war under the command of M. de la Jonquière was almost ready to sail, and the Company suggested that it would be a good plan to sail in its company until clear of the perilous area on this side of Finisterre. St Georges accepted the suggestion and decided to wait<sup>1</sup>—an unhappy decision for him as events turned out.

In the meantime, as the French directors had learned, Mostyn's news had reached London, together with other advices—mostly wrong—as to the strength and readiness of the French squadrons in the Bay. The refit of all the ships in home waters had been pressed forward diligently since Anson's return, and in spite of the long winter cruising a large number of ships was now nearly ready for sea. Besides employing a Western Squadron it had been intended to strengthen the force at Cape Breton by eight more ships under Warren in case of another attempt being made to recover the fortress. But when the news of the

<sup>1</sup> The East India Company's letter is in In letters, Anson, 1747: it was among the correspondence taken by Anson on May 3rd.

French preparations was received, the Admiralty came to the conclusion that it would be unwise to weaken the force in home waters, and that the concentration in a strong Western Squadron from which detachments could be made was better than dissipation of strength in smaller squadrons on several stations. They communicated their views to the Council, and a meeting of the Committee to discuss the matter was held on March 30th at the Duke of Bedford's house. It was a regular meeting of the Committee of Council, but besides the great officers of state it was remarkable for an unusually strong representation of seamen. Lord Vere Beauclerk of the Admiralty, Anson of the Admiralty and Western Squadron, and Warren second-in-command of the squadron were all present<sup>1</sup>. The decision made by the Council shews the nature of the matter under discussion. It is recorded in the following terms:

"The Lords of the Admiralty having represented that considering the naval force of France that is now actually at Brest and the neighbouring French ports, and the strength of his Majesty's fleet at home, there may not be a sufficient force if the ships designed to be sent to North America under the command of Rear Admiral Warren should go thither; and therefore propose that three ships of the line only should be sent to Commodore Knowles for the defence of Louisbourg and Nova Scotia; that all the force that can be got should go to sea under the command of Vice Admiral Anson: that Rear Admiral Warren should go with Mr Anson, and that in case Mr Anson should have intelligence that any part of the Brest squadron is gone to North America, Mr Anson is to despatch immediately Rear Admiral Warren thither with a sufficient force for the defence of his Majesty's possessions in North America. And the better to enable Mr Warren effectually to defend them in case the French should have any design upon them, it is also proposed that one of the regiments of Lieut.-General St Clair should go on board Mr Anson's fleet to be sent as was designed to North America if there be occasion. It is also proposed that notice of this disposition should be immediately sent to Commodore Knowles and Governor Shirley, that they should be directed to meet and confer together upon the proper measures to be forthwith taken for the defence of Acadia and Louisbourg, and that they should retain as many of the Americans that are now raised in the several Governments as may be necessary for the immediate defence of those places."

The instructions to Anson embody this decision. Dated March 30th, they were presumably made out in accordance with it. The freedom of action accorded to him in all that might arise deserves particular notice. They ran as follows:

Whereas we have received intelligence that the French are making great preparations at Brest, and in the other ports of France, and whereas we have thought proper to put under your command his Majesty's ships named in the list hereunto annexed<sup>2</sup>, to form a squadron, as well to oppose and defeat the

<sup>1</sup> The other members were the Lord Chancellor, Mr Pelham, the Lord President, Duke of Newcastle and Lord Chesterfield. S.P. Dom. Various, v, March 30th, 1747.

<sup>2</sup> 'Yarmouth,' 'Monmouth,' 'Hampton Court,' 'Edinburgh,' 70; 'Namur,' 74; 'Kent,' 70; 'Prince Frederick,' 64; 'Princess Louisa,' 'Windsor,' 'Eagle,' 'Lyon,' 'Nottingham,' 60; 'Centurion,' 54; 'Portland,' 'Salisbury,' 'Gloucester,'

designs of the enemy as to defend and protect the trade of his Majesty's subjects; we do hereby require and direct you to repair forthwith down to Portsmouth where some of the said ships are fitting, and to hoist your flag on board such of them as you think fit, and hasten their despatch all that is possible: and as soon as such a number of them as you shall judge sufficient are got ready for sailing, you are to proceed with them down the Channel, leaving such orders for those that are not ready, to follow you as you judge proper.

You are to call off Plymouth for such other of the ships of your squadron, as are ready, and leaving orders for the rest to follow you, you are to proceed out of the Channel, and taking under your command such ships of your squadron as you may meet with at sea, you are to cruise on such station or stations as you shall judge proper (according to the intelligence you have, or may receive) for intercepting and destroying the ships of the enemy, their convoys outward and homeward bound, and for suppressing their privateers, and annoying their trade, and for protecting the trade of his Majesty's subjects.

You are at liberty to send detachments from you, whenever you judge it necessary, to cruise on separate stations, for the better meeting with the ships of the enemy, and to give them such orders, as you think proper for that purpose.

You are also at liberty to send such ships of your squadron as shall be foul or sickly, into Port, and to order their captains to return to you, or otherwise, as you shall judge best for his Majesty's service.

You are to continue at sea, so long as you shall judge necessary for his Majesty's service according to the intelligence you shall have of the enemy's proceedings, and then to return into port, with all or part of your squadron, proceeding with those above the 4th rate to Portsmouth and sending such of the rest as you think fit into Plymouth, and to leave such orders with those you shall keep at sea, to cruise on such stations, as you shall judge best for his Majesty's service.

And whereas we have appointed Rear Admiral Warren to serve in the squadron under your command, you are to take the said Rear Admiral under your command accordingly, and to employ him as you think best for his Majesty's service, and in case you shall get such undoubted accounts of the motions of the enemy, as shall make you judge it necessary to send a strong detachment after them, to any parts, you are at liberty to employ Mr Warren on that service if you think fit. For which, etc.

Given, etc., March 30th, 1747<sup>1</sup>.

Vere Beauclerk. Geo. Grenville. Bedford. Duncannon.

Both the decision of the Council and the instructions to Anson express the principle of giving the Admiral in command of the Western Squadron as strong a force as practicable, with freedom to detach a flying squadron in pursuit of the enemy. A letter written by Warren so long before as January, 1745, is not without interest in this connexion, especially when it is recollected that he was present at the meeting in London.

"I have been often surprised," he wrote, "that there has not happened in so long a war more brushes between our ships of war and those of the French and Spaniards, since 'tis plain they all go to sea. I think if I commanded ten good clean sailing ships of the line, not too much limited by orders, but left to follow

'Falkland,' 'Portland's' prize, 50; 'Hector,' 44; 'Ambuscade,' 40; 'Inverness,' 24; 'Shoreham,' 'Syren,' 24; 'Viper,' 'Vulture,' 'Falcon,' 10. 14; 'Pluto,' 'Vulcan,' 6. 8. 'Defiance,' 'Bristol,' 'St George,' 'Devonshire,' 'Pembroke,' 'Chester,' 'Prince George,' 'Dolphin' and 'Kingfisher' were added during the next three days.

<sup>1</sup> These instructions were thus commented on by Anson, in acknowledging their receipt. "I have received and considered my instructions and do not find that any alterations are necessary to be made in them." In letters, April 2nd, 1747.

the enemy wherever I could trace them by intelligence or otherwise I would not fail to give a good account of some of them or a bad one of myself. You'll pardon me when I beg to tell you I am far from having the vanity to imagine I could do better or so well as many other gentlemen, but I verily believe their being too much circumscribed or that they can't be spared from other services is one great reason why they don't often meet<sup>1</sup>."

This excellent advice was now put into practice. In conjunction with the Western Squadron and those abroad, this flying force admirably completed the system of the defence of our interests across the ocean.

On April 5th Anson hoisted his flag on board the 'Prince George' at Spithead, with Warren as his second in command in the 'Devonshire.' He weighed next day with such ships of his squadron as were ready and present<sup>2</sup>, and for those which were not ready—the 'Yarmouth,' 'Kent' and three fireships—he left orders to join him at his secret rendezvous which was "between the latitudes of 46° and 47° 30', twenty leagues westward of Belleisle." An easterly wind served him down Channel, and he was joined next day by ten ships from Plymouth<sup>3</sup>. He left similar orders as to joining him for the unready remainder at the western port, and then proceeded to his station. When he got off Ushant he sent the 'Falkland,' 50 and 'Tavistock' cutter in to reconnoitre Brest, with instructions that so soon as they should have gathered intelligence as to the force and movements of the enemy, they were to join him without loss of time off Belleisle.

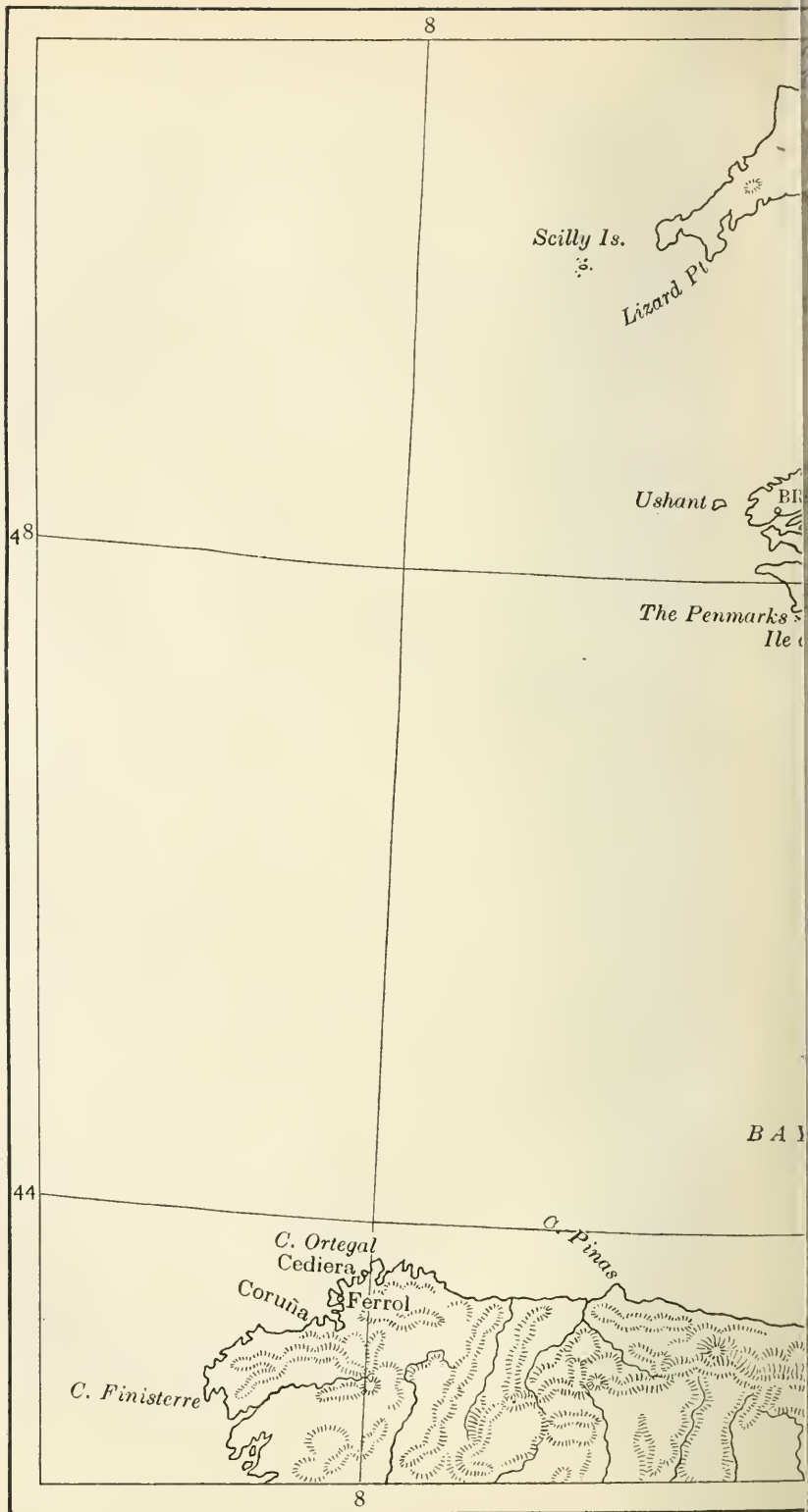
For the first few days Anson cruised off Belleisle, examining all passing ships to gather news of the French. No certain intelligence was got from any of them, and all that the Admiral could do was to speculate on the probable intentions of the enemy. His belief was that the allies would act in cooperation with each other. Writing on April 7th he said: "Captain Keppell tells me all the ships the French had at Toulon and in the Straits are now lying at Carthagena, so that the Board may depend on their scheme being to join all their ships together; whatever they intend to do with them afterwards, their push will either be here or in Italy." Wherever their push might be, no better station for frustrating their designs could be chosen than the neighbourhood of Brest, and no better means than a strong squadron adequately served by frigates. England had suffered sufficiently in the two preceding years from the bewildering effect of an unlocated fleet, and Anson had no intention if he could help it of allowing that situation to arise again. But he could do nothing without adequate information,

<sup>1</sup> Warren to Anson, January 18th, 1745. B.M. Add. MS. 15957.

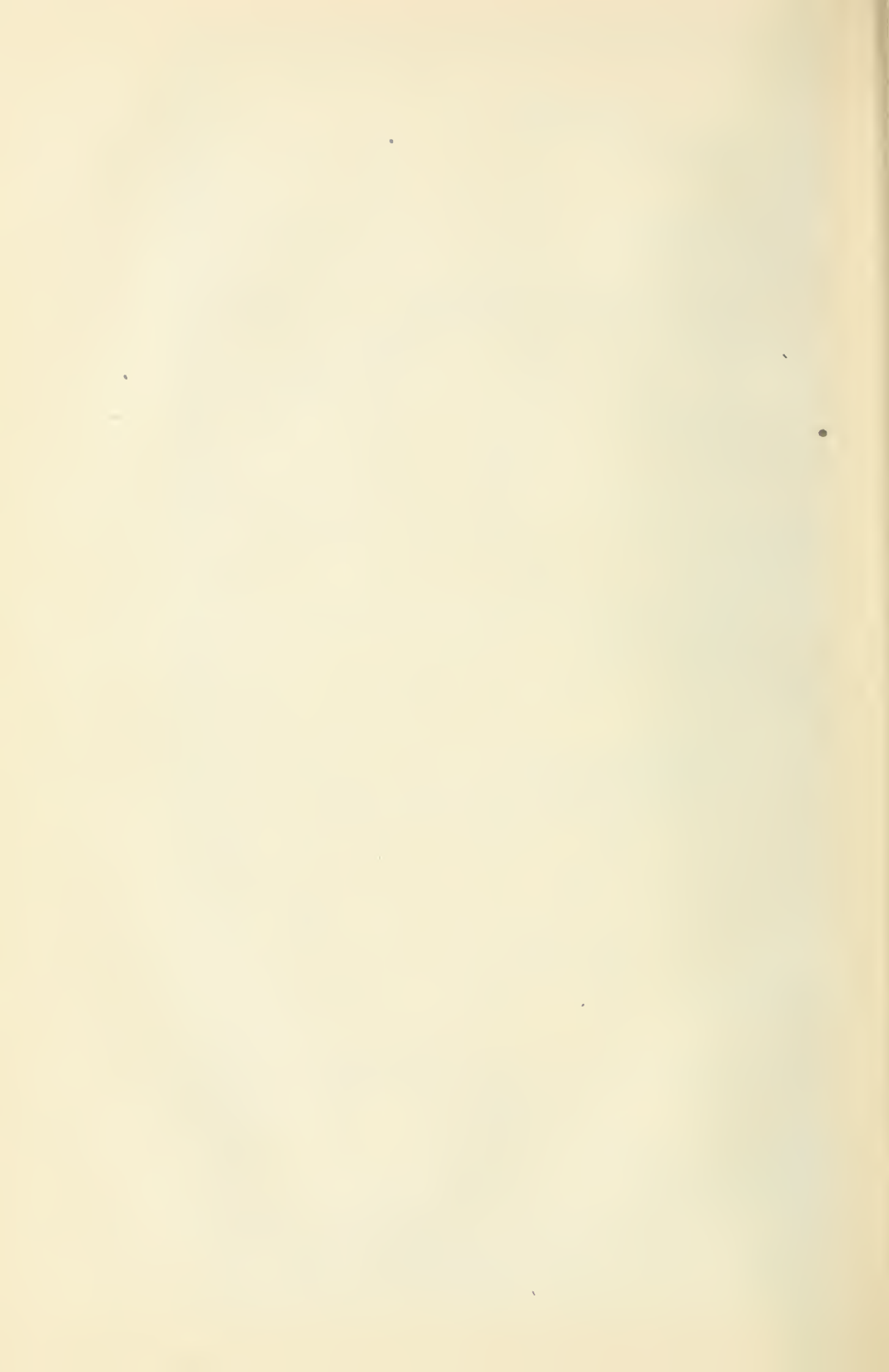
<sup>2</sup> 'Prince George,' 'Devonshire,' 'Lyon,' 'Defiance,' 'Princess Louisa,' 'Bristol,' 'Chester,' 'Pembroke,' and 'Terror' bomb.

<sup>3</sup> 'Namur,' 'Hampton Court,' 'Prince Frederick,' 'Monmouth,' 'Falkland,' 'Nottingham,' 'Eagle,' 'Windsor,' 'Centurion' and 'Otter' sloop.











and, like his predecessor Martin, he wrote and urged that as many frigates as possible might be sent to him to give him the means of obtaining this essential factor.

The 'Falkland' and 'Tavistock' were unsuccessful in their attempt to solve the question of the state of the Brest squadron. Thick weather and gales prevented them from getting news, and after three weeks out Anson was still in the dark. But on April 20th a piece of valuable information was received. The 'Nottingham' on that day spoke a ship which had left St Martin's three days before from which it was learned that 12 sail of the line and nine merchant ships lay there, bound, it was believed, for Canada; it was even possible that they had already sailed. From such information as he had as to the strength of the French in the Biscay ports, Anson judged that this squadron was made up of the ships from Brest. Brest therefore was probably empty, and Rochefort was the critical point. He therefore immediately decided to alter his station and cruise from five to 40 leagues north of Cape Ortegál "as being the likeliest place to intercept them." Leaving the 'Inverness' and 'Viper' in his rendezvous off Belleisle to look out for any reinforcing ships that might come from England, and sending the 'Falkland' and 'Tavistock' to look into St Martin's and Rochefort, he hastened away for Cape Ortegál. With his usual foresight he left several copies of instructions with the sloop captains, unaddressed, to be filled in by them and given to any reinforcing ships that should arrive.

As he ran south he exercised the squadron in cruising in extended order, sometimes in line abreast, sometimes in line ahead. Fifty and sixty-gun ships were ordered to extend the front as look-outs, taking station at daylight as far in advance, when in line ahead, or as wide upon the beam when in line abreast, as signals could be seen<sup>1</sup>. Not a day passed without some cruising exercise, and we find Anson repeating Martin's order of the previous year, when under similar circumstances he tried to intercept a Rochefort fleet, as to keeping all ships in a constant readiness for battle, and, in action keeping the barges manned and armed ready to deal with fireships<sup>2</sup>. Giving consideration to what he expected would be the formation of the enemy's line of battle, he readjusted his own line so that his heaviest ships were in the centre. The fleet in separate divisions in battle formation was constantly exercised and everything kept in the utmost readiness for immediate action.

<sup>1</sup> Thus: "Centurion to make sail every morning before daylight so as to be 5 miles ahead by daylight if on the starboard tack, and as much astern on the larboard tack." The sense of this order formed one of his additional instructions.

<sup>2</sup> The wind was easterly and Anson expected to find the enemy to windward of him. The order as to barges was included in his additional instructions.

As the days passed without further news of the French the Admirals began to fear that in spite of all their precautions, the enemy had escaped them.

"I do assure you my dear Sir," wrote Warren to his Commander-in-Chief on April 23rd, "I feel the anxiety you must be under upon the Dutch intelligence<sup>1</sup>, for if it is to be depended upon, then how to meet the enemy is the question. But sure no man can do more than look for them in the Route they will most probably take, and the captains were I believe to a man of opinion with us that they would choose that of the coast of Galicia, and that Cape Ortegal, as the wind was then easterly and the enemy supposed to have sailed from St Martin's on the day before you received the intelligence, would be the best station to intercept them. If they did sail then and soon after met with a southerly wind, 'tis likely they may not be able (should it be their intention) to hold the coast of Spain nor you to get there: in short 'tis all chance to which we must submit, and content ourselves with the merit of deserving success by our diligence whether we meet with it or not<sup>2</sup>."

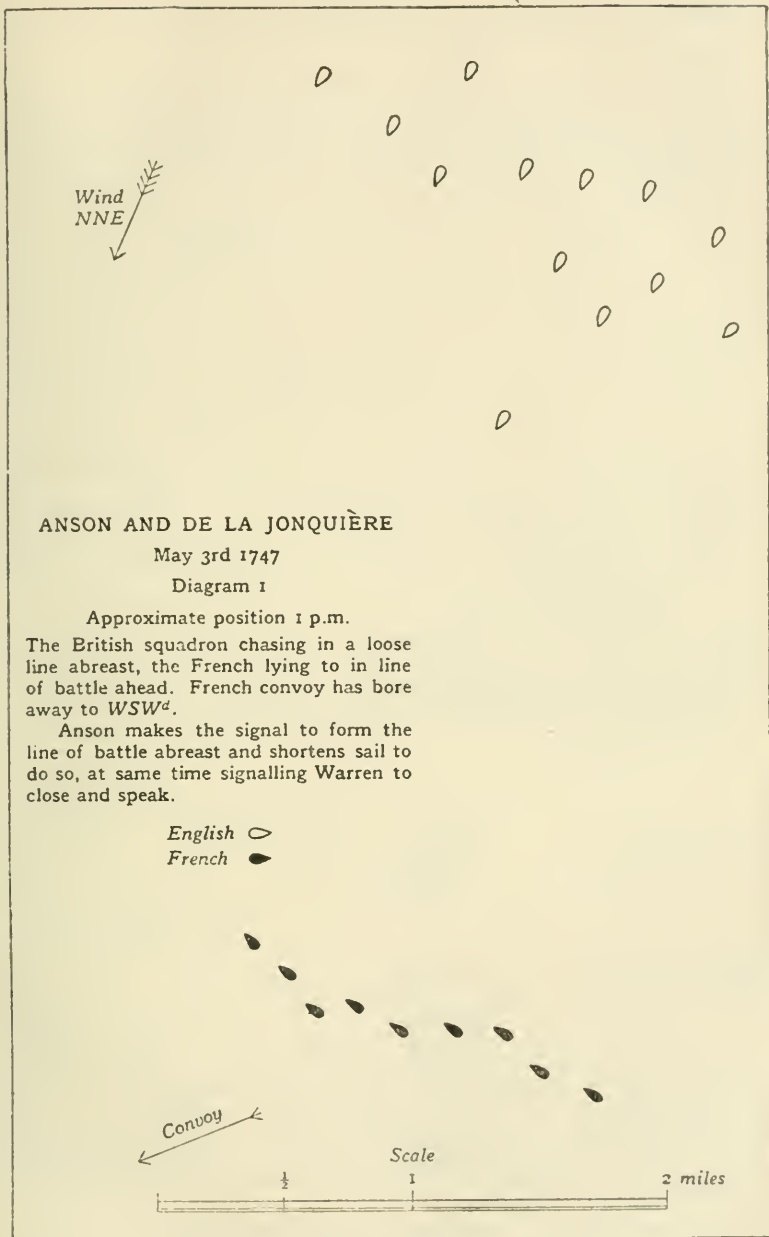
Warren's friendly candour and comforting encouragement are pleasant to read. When such a spirit exists between the principal Commanders there is every prospect of a successful outcome of their operations, provided fortune be kind.

On May 2nd, being then in about latitude 45°, Anson detached the 'Inverness' which had rejoined him from Belleisle and 'Falcon' to Rochefort for news, with instructions that if they sighted the French they were to come separately and find him, one in latitude 44° 30', the other in latitude 45° 20', a precaution typical of the care with which Anson organised the conduct of his squadron throughout; his frigates were also being continually detached to look into the French ports, returning immediately with their news, and being at once sent off again to get more.

At daylight on May 3rd Anson again spread the squadron in line abreast on a N.W. and S.E. line, the ships between half a mile and a mile apart. Some sail were shortly sighted by the 'Monmouth' in the N.W. quarter and chased by her, a movement which caused her to drop astern of the main body. Between 7 and 8 A.M. the 'Falcon' sloop returned to the squadron bringing the news that she had sighted a fleet of about 30 sail at 4 P.M. the day before, then bearing S.E. by S. from her and steering to the westward. A rapidly worked traverse shewed that the enemy must now be to the S.W. of the squadron and Anson at once filled and proceeded in order to intercept or overhaul them. Half an hour later the 'Namur' made the signal for seeing a fleet to the S.W., right in the course the squadron was steering. General chase was immediately signalled, the fireship 'Vulcan' was ordered to prime and

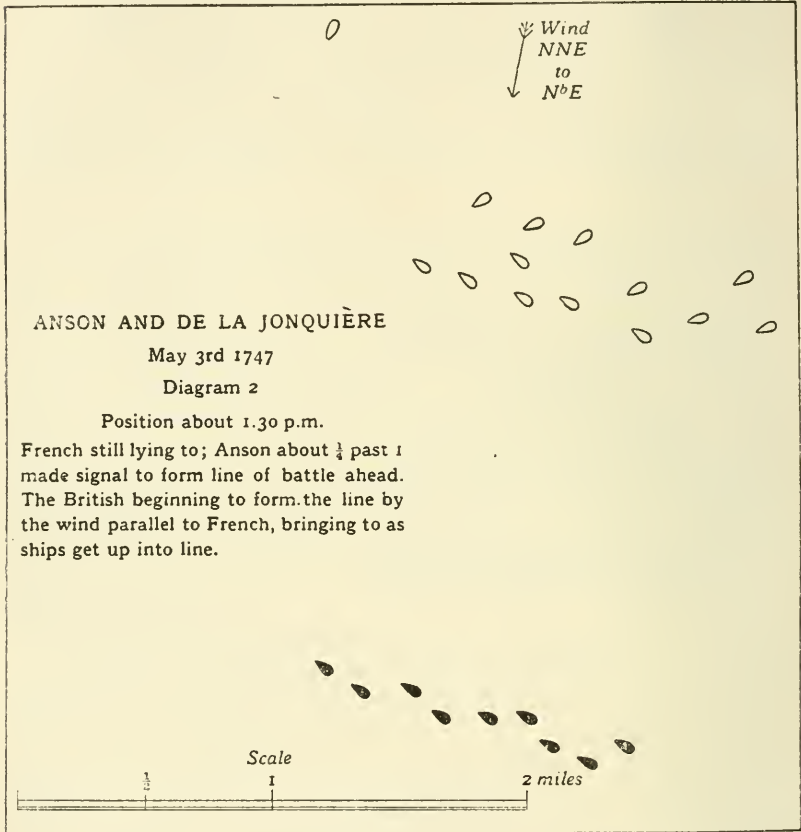
<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* that the French might already have sailed from Rochefort.

<sup>2</sup> Warren to Anson, April 23rd, 1747. B.M. Add. MS. 15957, f. 172.



the ships were cleared for action<sup>1</sup>. The British squadron rapidly drew up to the strangers and by 11 o'clock a large fleet could plainly be made out ahead.

As yet Anson had not called in his ships and the squadron was still extended. He now recalled cruisers<sup>2</sup>, particularly ordering those in the N.W. quarter, like the 'Monmouth,' to draw close in. By noon the



chase could be distinguished as a French fleet of which about 12 sail of large ships appeared to be drawing into a line of battle abreast, while the remainder crowded sail and stretched away ahead of them. Anson had now in sight the combined squadrons of de la Jonquièrre and Saint-Georges, with their convoys for North America and India.

<sup>1</sup> Nearly every ship in the squadron threw her boats overboard or cut away those that were towing. *Vide* Logs and Journals of the ships.

<sup>2</sup> The word "cruisers" does not mean frigates, but detached ships thrown out to cruise and look out, e.g. 'Monmouth' was a cruiser at this moment.

By 1 o'clock the British squadron had drawn up to within three miles of the enemy whose centre now bore S.W.<sup>1</sup>, and Anson began to form up his fleet in line abreast, at the same time calling Warren alongside to consult. The main body of the French had now brought to and lay with their heads to the N.W. in what appeared to be a line ahead, and Anson, within a quarter of an hour or so, altered his disposition making the signal to form line of battle ahead; to execute which order it was necessary to bring to. The 'Devonshire' soon closed the senior flagship and the two Admirals appear to have discussed the situation. What passed between them is not recorded, but it is said<sup>2</sup> that Warren advised an immediate attack in chase without waiting to form line, but that Anson preferred to await getting his ships together before attacking. The overwhelming superiority of the British squadron may well appear to justify Warren's opinion that such a pell-mell attack would not only be successful but would also give more time to complete the business by the capture of the convoy, but without being able to see the situation as it presented itself to the eyes of the Commander-in-Chief, it would be idle to do more than draw attention to the alternative which was apparently suggested by the second-in-command<sup>3</sup>.

The line took some time to form; nearly two hours seem to have

<sup>1</sup> Captain's Journal, 'Centurion.'

<sup>2</sup> Memoir of Admiral Warren. Naval Chronicle.

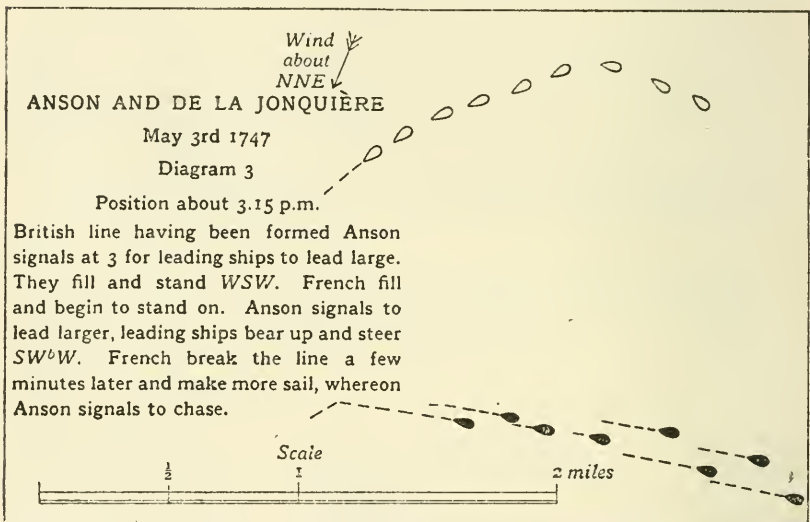
<sup>3</sup> The British and French squadrons were as follows:

BRITISH			FRENCH		
'Prince George'	90	Adm. Anson	'Sérieux'	66	M. de la Jonquière. King's ships, forming the escort of the convoy to Canada
'Devonshire'	66	R.-Adm. Warren	'Diamant'	56	
'Namur'	74		'Gloire'	46	
'Monmouth'	64		'Émeraude'	24	M. de St Georges. King's ships forming the escort of the East Indian ships
'Prince Frederick'	64		'Rubis'	52	
'Yarmouth'	64		'Invincible'	74	Taken by 'Falcon'
'Princess Louisa'	60		'Jason'	52	
'Defiance'	60		'Apollon'§	30	Taken by 'Monmouth,' 'Yarmouth' and 'Nottingham'
'Nottingham'	60		'Philibert'§	30	
'Pembroke'	60		'Thétis'§	20	Taken by 'Shoreham'
'Windsor'	60		'Dartmouth'	18	
'Centurion'	54		'Vigilante'	22	Taken by 'Shoreham'
'Falkland'	50		'Modeste'	22	
'Bristol'	50		3 merchant ships		
'Ambuscade'	40		2 merchant ships		
'Falcon,' sloop	10				
'Vulcan,' fireship					

All these French ships, except 'Émeraude' which was detached with the convoy, were taken. Those East India ships marked § were in the line of battle.

elapsed<sup>1</sup> after bringing to before Anson signalled to fill and proceed and for the ships in the van to lead large; but directly he saw this signal Warren, whose division was leading, bore away in chase instead of in succession, breaking the line, an action in which he was copied by several ships of his division. Anson at once signalled to him to reform the line; and as the leading ships appeared to him to be steering too high, signalled for them to lead larger.

There is nothing to shew what prompted Anson to make these two signals. He leaves no record of intentions in his Journal, but it is obvious that he may have had at least two ideas. He was a man who set great store by accuracy of movements and what was called "discipline" in a fleet, meaning what we should now term good station keeping. After

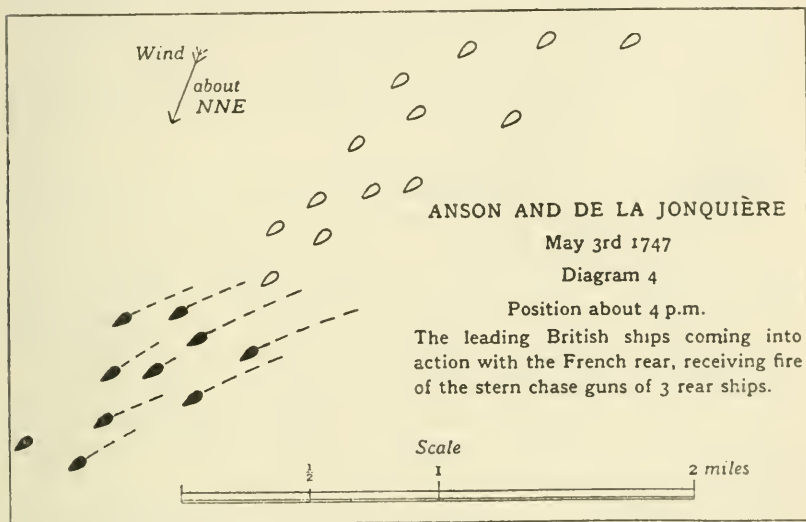


months of practising his fleet in bearing up and attacking in good order, he may well have determined that his attack should be orderly, his squadron well in hand, and its effect as conclusive as possible. The signal to lead larger may have been only made because he thought the leaders were not leading large enough to reach the enemy quickly, but it had an effect which may have been actually intended by Anson—instead of fetching the leading ships of the enemy, the blow would be delivered on their centre, and a concentration on their rear would have followed. Whether Anson designed this movement cannot be said; but no sooner did the French see the squadron bearing up and

<sup>1</sup> I say "seem to have elapsed" because the accounts and times vary so greatly in the different Logs and Journals.

steering for their centre than de la Jonquière at once got his foretacks on board and without waiting a moment, bore up and crowded away to the W.S.W. Now Anson delayed no longer. The French had broken their line and were in flight, and he hauled down the signal for the line and hoisted that for the chase and attack.

Owing to the French thus making away it was no longer possible to strike them in the line, and the action began with chase guns. The 'Centurion,' 'Namur,' 'Defiance' and 'Windsor,' which were the leading ships, pushed into the French rear in an extended order, the first-named ship, commanded by that excellent officer Peter Denis, engaging single-handed the 'Sérieux' and 'Invincible' for some time before her next astern came to her assistance. The 'Nottingham,' 'Yarmouth,' and



'Devonshire' were the next to engage, and within half-an-hour the battle was raging in the rear, where the majority of the British squadron was concentrating upon the hindmost of the French ships. At the same time Anson detached the 'Falkland,' 'Ambuscade' and 'Falcon' to pursue the convoy, which de la Jonquière had detached with the 'Émeraude,' to endeavour to keep it in sight during the night.

The French ships, with the exception of the 'Jason' whose Commander struck in the early stages of the engagement, were fought with a gallantry and determination which has immortalised M. de la Jonquière and his crews. Individual gallantry, however, was not confined to one side. Owing to the manner in which the attack was made, the leading British ships were engaged with superior force. Strung out in

chase they came into action in a rough line ahead and were met with a heavy fire from the more closely grouped French main body, each British ship as she arrived receiving the broadsides of two ships and the shot from chase guns of others. This was unavoidable in the circumstances, and it was possibly the situation which Anson had desired to avoid when he waited so long to get his whole squadron together. As it was, six British ships only were able to get into action during the first hour<sup>1</sup>. The conduct of these ships is described thus in the Captain's Journal of the 'Yarmouth.' "[About] 4.30 we began to fire<sup>2</sup>, and sheering from quarter to quarter with the 'Namur' and 'Princess Louisa' soon put the enemy to great disorder by shattering their sails and rigging and carrying away several of their yards and topmasts." The 'Princess Louisa's' Journal says, "About 4 began to engage one of the enemy's largest ships. Soon after the 'Centurion' had her maintopmast shot away. Do., run further to leeward between her and the enemy and gave her our broadside. At the same time received the fire of the French admiral and engaged him and the other ship for some time 'till more ships astern came up." Boscawen in the 'Namur' says, "We came within gun-shot of the sternmost of the enemy when they began to fire their stern chase upon us. We stood on and soon after came very near three or four of them where we were warmly engaged on both sides for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour. . . we then shot ahead and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past four engaged the 'Sérieux' (flag) within pistol shot more than half-an-hour when she struck to us. We left her and made sail ahead and soon came up with the 'Ruby.' She struck to us likewise." The 'Centurion,' which boldly led into the middle of the fleet, was engaged by the 'Sérieux' and 'Invincible' together for nearly a quarter of an hour before the 'Namur' and 'Defiance' came up to help her, and after an hour's fighting had her maintopmast shot away, her yards shot through and five feet of water in the hold. There can be no doubt that the manner in which the leading British ships opened the attack was no less worthy of praise than the defence made by the enemy.

By 5 o'clock the remainder of the British squadron began to come up. Warren in the 'Devonshire' drew up to the 'Sérieux' about that time, and the 'Nottingham' and 'Pembroke' not long after were also in action. The rearmost French ships now began to find the conditions reversed, and whereas until then it had been they who were able to bring superior force upon the attacking enemy, the latter now were

<sup>1</sup> 'Centurion,' 54; 'Windsor,' 60; 'Namur,' 74; 'Yarmouth,' 64; 'Defiance,' 60; 'Princess Louisa,' 60. The 'Falkland,' 50, also came up but was sent in pursuit of an East Indiaman, the 'Philibert,' 30, whom she captured after two hours' chase.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* half-an-hour after the headmost ships had begun, which was at 4 o'clock according to 'Yarmouth' Log.



able to establish a local superiority; and though the fighting lasted for full another hour<sup>1</sup>, some of the heavier sailing British ships had still not got into action by the time the last of the French were about to surrender. The 'Prince George,' Anson's flagship, only came up abreast the 'Invincible' at the last moment, the 'Prince Frederick' and 'Monmouth' did not get into action at all. Before darkness fell all the French ships had surrendered, and when possession had been taken of the prizes, Anson detached the 'Monmouth,' 'Nottingham' and 'Yarmouth' to pursue the convoy.

The chasing tactics of this action consisted in an attempt by the British ships each to disable her opponent, and having done so, to leave her to be finished off by those coming up from astern. When fresh ships came up, or when an opponent dropped out, each ship pressed on to engage the next ahead. The same system will be seen in use in the second great action of this year, and attention is called to it in order to point out the difference in the doctrine of this and a later period as to the tactics of a chasing action. Commanders in the subsequent wars reversed the practice and each ship was ordered as she came up to engage her opponent until she had captured her, the fresh ships coming up from astern passing on to engage those ahead<sup>2</sup>.

The British ships had suffered considerably aloft and some time was needed to refit sufficiently to proceed home, but when this was done Anson with his squadron and his prizes steered for St Helen's, where he anchored on May 16th.

The success was great; out of a fleet of 38 ships, no less than 18 were taken, and even those which escaped did not all reach their destination for the peril of the voyage, unescorted, appeared too great, and they returned to their home ports. But the enemy had been very nearly missed altogether. The East India fleet had sailed in the face of Mostyn's small squadron and, but for the friendly gale of March 28th, both expeditions would have got away untouched. Only the fortunate circumstance that the 'Nottingham' picked up the news of the presence of the French at Ile d'Aix enabled Anson to get south in time to intercept the enemy.

The victory, which was the first decisive naval success of the war, was most welcome. After seven years of hostilities a British naval

<sup>1</sup> According to some accounts the 'Sérieux' surrendered at 5.15. According to others, at 7 o'clock.

<sup>2</sup> Final Additional Fighting Instructions, 1781-3, Art. xiv. Prescribes for engaging the enemy in succession in chase when "each ship as they get up are to engage their opponents and on no pretence quit them until they are so disabled that they cannot get away or submit." *Signals and Instructions*, N.R.S. vol. xxxv. p. 291.

force had at last succeeded in getting alongside an enemy and inflicting a really crushing blow. The disproportion of the forces was no reason for not rejoicing, yet there were political opponents whose rancour led them to belittle the engagement, and to represent the honours which fell to Anson as having been very easily gained. Foreign observers, however, were not slow to appreciate the importance of the British success at sea, and all Marshal Saxe's military gains in Flanders did not prevent a fall of over 10 per cent. in the French stocks. Anson was rewarded with a peerage, and there being no urgent service for which he was now required at sea he returned to London to resume his place at the Board of Admiralty, leaving Warren, who received a Knighthood of the Bath, in command of the Western Squadron.

Though depreciated by some at home the victory was far-reaching in its effects. Besides the immediate loss to the French of their men-of-war and East India ships, it affected the course of affairs both in Canada and India. The operations in the former area would have taken a different turn if M. de la Jonquière had reached Quebec and had been able to support the expedition then in progress against Annapolis, while in the East Indies, the precarious condition to which the French settlements had been brought would have been mitigated. As it was, even the small force under Bouvet de Lozier that weathered the gale of March 28th and subsequently reached India was of inestimable benefit to the colonists. The supplies he was able to throw into Pondicherry served to assist Dupleix in his defence against the strong forces which Boscawen brought out to capture the settlement in the following year. The general naval situation at the beginning of this year had not been greatly unlike that in the spring of 1756, and from the same cause. An extended winter cruising had disabled the fleet, and in the interval which elapsed before it could again take the sea the enemy was able to prepare his squadrons, in this case for Canada and India, in the later case to Minorca. "The greater the effort which is made for some important object in order to give it the better certainty of success, the greater will your inability be to make another such effort for any purpose whatever<sup>1</sup>." So wrote the Admiralty in 1756, and so had it proved in 1747, but fortunately Anson's energy in refitting the fleet and the gales which delayed the departure of the enemy, combined to permit another effort to be made in time.

After Anson's departure for London Warren was but three days in port before he was again ordered to sea. On May 19th the Admiralty received news from their intelligence officers that a convoy of 200 sail was expected home from San Domingo, a most important and valuable

<sup>1</sup> Papers relating to the loss of Minorca, N.R.S. vol. XLII. pp. 12-13.

fleet. Warren was told to get to sea as quickly as possible with as many ships as he could make ready. None were in a condition to sail at once though he hoped that six or eight<sup>1</sup> could be refitted within four days. The ships, however, were less ready than Warren believed and he did not sail until June 3rd, and even then had six ships only<sup>2</sup>; and with these he stood down to take up a station off Finisterre to be in the way for meeting the San Domingo fleet<sup>3</sup>.

In the meantime some of the ships which had been left behind or had parted company from Anson's squadron before the battle of May 3rd were still at sea. Captain Fox in the 'Kent' had left Spithead the day after Anson had sailed. He went to Plymouth to join the flag, but Anson was already away with the easterly wind; Fox therefore proceeded to the rendezvous, "120 leagues to the westward of Scilly between the latitudes of 48° and 49° 30'." Here he opened his sealed orders, which gave him the secret rendezvous 20 to 30 leagues to the westward of Belleisle, between the latitudes of 46° and 47° 30'; but he saw nothing of the Admiral on reaching those parts for Anson had left the station off Belleisle on the 20th. He had detached the 'Eagle' to cruise for 14 days in search of a 44-gun French privateer which he heard was at sea, and she, the 'Lyon,' the 'Hampton Court' and the 'Ambuscade' all joined the 'Kent' between the 20th and 22nd. From them Fox learned of Anson's new rendezvous off Cape Ortegal, and four days later—on the 26th April—he was in that station with his four ships. But although a week passed before the French were met by Anson, Fox had not the good fortune to fall in with him and he thereby missed the action, of which he did not get the news until May 19th. When he learned that the battle had taken place and the convoy had gone, Fox detached a sloop to England to inform the Admiralty of his whereabouts, and to report that he proposed to continue to cruise where he was until further orders.

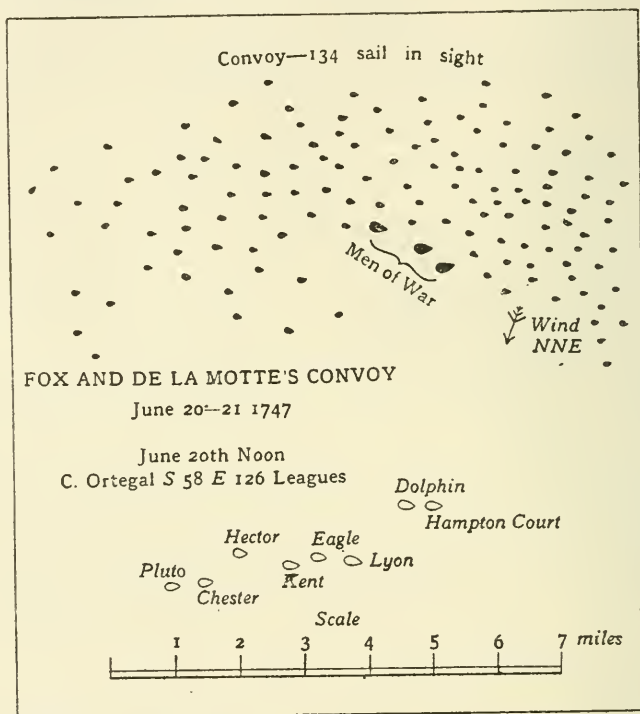
His squadron was joined on June 2nd by the 'Hector' and 'Dolphin,' which had been cruising in company with the 'Salisbury,' 'Syren,' 'Inverness' and 'Amazon' off the Ile d'Yeu; and on the 15th, as his water was beginning to get low, Fox began to work back to the northward. Five days later he received the reward of his steady cruising.

<sup>1</sup> Six from Portsmouth and two from Plymouth.

<sup>2</sup> 'St George,' 90; 'Devonshire,' 66; 'Yarmouth,' 64; 'Nottingham,' 60; 'Hampshire,' 50; 'Ambuscade,' 40; also 'Falcon' sloop and 'Pluto' fireship. The 'Princess Louisa' and 'Defiance' were ordered to follow when ready.

<sup>3</sup> The San Domingo fleet had got safely away from Cape François without interruption from the Jamaica squadron. An engagement had been fought between the convoy and the British cruising ships under Digby Dent in which the French had the advantage and thereby secured themselves a clear passage in that area.

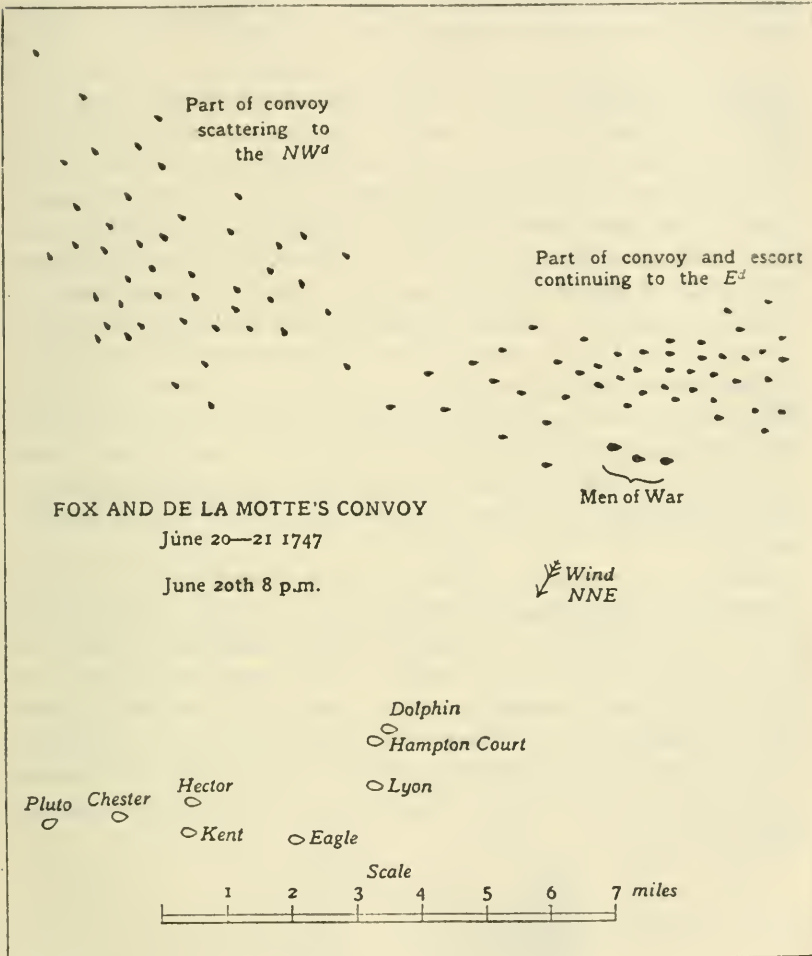
At 4 A.M. on the 20th June, the wind being N.N.E., the 'Hampton Court' made the signal for seeing 13 sail to the N.W., standing to the eastward. During the next hour still more were seen, and before 6 o'clock over 120 sail could be counted. All reefs were shaken out as soon as the strangers were sighted, yards were slung, the ships cleared for action and the signal to chase was made, the ships standing in the following order: 'Dolphin,' 'Hampton Court,' 'Lyon,' 'Eagle,' 'Kent,' 'Hector,' 'Chester<sup>1</sup>' and 'Pluto<sup>1</sup>.'



The fleet upon which the British squadron had fallen was the homeward bound convoy from San Domingo and was escorted by three men-of-war—the 'Magnanime,' 'Alcide' and 'Arc-en-Ciel'—under the command of M. du Bois de la Motte—that fleet which had been engaged by Digby Dent off the west end of Hispaniola on March 25th. Some hours elapsed before Fox was able to distinguish the men-of-war, as a fog came on shortly after 8 in which even the British ships lost sight of each other; but at about 11 the weather cleared and the French men-of-war could be seen drawing themselves into a line

<sup>1</sup> These ships had joined a few days earlier.

of battle abreast. De la Motte lay to with his three ships for some time, but as Fox rapidly drew up and the French Commander observed the superior force by which he was being attacked he filled again and stood on. By noon the two squadrons were about five miles apart, with the French Commodore on the weather beam of the 'Hamp-



ton Court' which was the headmost heavy ship of the British squadron, the British under all possible sail, keeping their wind, the French under topsails and foresail, and steering about a point free.

All through the afternoon the chase continued. At about 5 the French made more sail and hauled their wind, and at the same time scattered the convoy; the headmost ships continued to the eastward

with the escort, the leewardmost tacked to the N.W. The British sailed their best to come up with the men-of-war and the leading ships, but when darkness fell the enemy had well maintained his position.

At daylight next morning the body of the merchant fleet bore N.E. by N. and was distant about four leagues, but there was now no sign of du Bois de la Motte and the escort. "I could distinguish nothing of the men-of-war," wrote the captain of the 'Lyon,' "believing they had tack'd and gone to the N.W. in the night." Fox detached the 'Eagle' to the N.W. to look out, and continuing the chase, gradually drew up towards the convoy, but one capture only was made during that day. Next morning (the 22nd) some of the scattered ships were still in sight. In the light breeze, hardly more than a calm, the heavy-laden merchantmen were steadily overhauled and 13 of them were taken. Next morning a strong S.W. gale broke. The British ships were now in the heart of the fleet and the taking of prizes continued notwithstanding the weather; but the gale favoured the enemy, and in the end about 64 ships gained the shelter of the French ports. Warren, who as we have seen had sailed on the 3rd June, was not far off when this great capture was in progress, but the thick weather which heralded the south-wester proved a shelter to the enemy, and though he ran into the middle of them he captured four only with his squadron. Forty-eight prizes in all were taken, the value of which was considerable<sup>1</sup>.

Warren now remained cruising off Cape Ortegal. A small French convoy on its way home from the West Indies with the 'Étoile' and another man-of-war was intercepted on June 21st, the 'Étoile' was burnt and four of the convoy taken. Next day, having news that a fleet of coasters had put into Cediera, Warren sent in three small ships under Captain Roddam of the 'Viper,' who first engaged and silenced the battery at the entrance, then landed his men and destroyed the defences,

<sup>1</sup> The prize money amounted to £294,486. 3s. 7d. Of this the shares were as follows:

	£	s.	d.
Flag ... ..	36,810	15	5
Captain ... ..	8165	1	0
Lieutenant ... ..	1049	15	10
Warrant Officer ... ..	459	5	8
Petty Officer ... ..	132	12	10
Seaman ... ..	25	19	0

Vernon protested against the system of the distribution of prize money. "There is one thing indeed which ought to be amended: a very unequal distribution is made of the prize money between the officers and sailors; the sailor's part bearing no proportion to that of the officers. By increasing the share of the sailors, you will increase their spirits and resolution." To improve the sailors' lot was his view, and to "change the present hateful method of impressing." *Parl. History*, vol. xiv. p. 406.

burnt 28 sail and brought out six more. A 36-gun French frigate was run ashore near Cape Pinas on July 8th, and a fine outward bound East Indiaman of 500 tons was taken on the 27th. No effort was made by the French or Spaniards to relieve the situation which was created by the presence of this strong British squadron. Instead, they confined their naval operations to the defensive system of convoy, exposing their forces to defeat in detail. Convoy is effective only under a proper cover, but this the French could not furnish.

Warren, having been at sea for close upon two months, returned to Plymouth with ten ships on August 1st, leaving a small cruising squadron<sup>1</sup> of three ships in the Bay between the latitudes of Belleisle and Ushant to look out for outward bound East Indiamen. When he arrived he found that Anson had resumed his seat at the Board of Admiralty and that the command of the Western Squadron had been given to himself<sup>2</sup>. He was, however, unable to continue at sea as a bad attack of scurvy made it necessary for him to come ashore to restore his health.

No Rear Admiral had been appointed as second in command when Warren took Anson's place. There was, however, an officer available on whom Warren's eye quickly fell. Captain Hawke had been included in the last promotion on July 17th, and on the same day had been ordered to hoist his flag as Rear Admiral of the White at Plymouth for the purpose of superintending the fitting out and refits of the ships at that port. Warren at once wrote suggesting that Hawke should be joined with him in the command, and, if two Admirals were not at the moment actually needed afloat, that Hawke might take the squadron out while he himself was recovering his health. The Admiralty acceded to the request and at once appointed Hawke as second in command<sup>3</sup>. The Rear Admiral was a very junior man even for the temporary command of the squadron which had earlier been held by the senior officer on the Flag List, and it may be that some hesitation was felt in committing it to him alone. Warren's assurance that Hawke was fully to be trusted removed any doubts that might be felt; and permission was given for him to go to sea alone and for Warren to come ashore. Two days later Hawke sailed with three ships, to join the three which Warren had left in the Bay.

<sup>1</sup> 'Prince Frederick,' 64; 'Centurion,' 54; 'Augusta,' 60.

<sup>2</sup> His instructions were on exactly the same lines as those of Anson already quoted. They were dated July 20th. The squadron placed under his orders consisted of 16 ships of the line and seven 50-gun-ships, eight frigates, three sloops and two fireships.

<sup>3</sup> Warren's In letter is dated August 3rd. The Admiralty Out letter appointing Hawke is of August 5th.

Within a few days after Hawke had sailed, intelligence was received that the French were making renewed preparations to retrieve their fortunes at sea. It was reported that every ship that could swim was being fitted out at Brest, that others were making ready at Rochefort, that the Spaniards were shewing the greatest activity at Ferrol, while at Carthagen a eight ships of the line were lying ready for sailing. The British Mediterranean squadron was fully engaged on the coast of Provence, and Carthagen a was not under observation, though the total British force up the Straits was approximately equal to the combined French and Spanish squadrons<sup>1</sup>. The impression which these French and Spanish preparations made upon the British Admiralty is uncertain, but it appears that although they did not anticipate any immediate concentration of the allied squadrons, they considered it likely that such a movement, which so clearly was the true solution, would ultimately be attempted with a view to crushing the British naval forces in the Bay and thus either relieving the almost unbearable pressure which those forces were exerting upon French national life, or easing the situation in Italy. Warren, whose opinion upon the situation was asked wrote thus on August 18th:

“It is difficult to determine whether the eight ships at Carthagen a are destined to join those equipping at Ferrol at that place or at Cadiz, but I should imagine if they are to act any part in conjunction with the French ships said to be equipping in their several ports in the Bay of Biscay, that Ferrol will be the most convenient place in their joining. If their Lordships approve of my sending two or three good clean cruisers off Cadiz and between it and the Straits mouth, with a frigate or a sloop to look into Carthagen a to observe the motions of the enemies' ships there, it will I believe be the readiest and surest method of discovering, and by that means of frustrating, their designs.”

This recommendation was no sooner received by the Admiralty than it was acted upon. Instructions were sent to Hawke, who was still to the westward of Belleisle, to despatch cruisers to the stations mentioned, and at the same time he was recommended to consider whether it would be possible to divide his force and thus furnish a squadron off Cadiz to look out for the galleons which were expected home this year.

In the meantime every effort was being made to hasten the refit of the Western Squadron and get the ships to sea again. The need, already well realized, for strength in this force was emphasised a few days later by news which left little doubt as to the real intentions of the French. Captain Samuel Faulkner of the ‘Amazon,’ who had been sent out by Warren on August 6th to look into Brest and having done so to carry his report to the senior officer at the rendezvous, returned to

<sup>1</sup> Orders had in fact been given on August 6th for eight large ships and a heavy frigate to be sent home at once in order to refit, being reported unfit for the sea. This left the squadron in the condition described.



Plymouth on August 23rd with his news and with a letter from Hawke, dated the 21st. In this the Rear Admiral said that it was his opinion the Brest squadron was intended to convoy the West Indian merchant fleet from Rochelle. They had a strong squadron at Brest of at least six heavy ships, and three more were at Rochefort; and he asked therefore for a reinforcement of clean ships<sup>1</sup>. Faulkner, who brought the news, was brimming over with pleasure at the anticipation of a battle. "By all accounts," he wrote to Warren, "they intend to dispute their passage with us; if so we shall have humming work for the Admiral has but six ships and a frigate with him. . . . I wish, Sir, with all my heart, you was out, for I really believe the ships at Brest are to join them [*i.e.* those at Rochefort] and they intend to force a passage for their merchantmen." The French had nine months' provisions on board, and Warren expected that North America was their objective.

Warren recommended that every available ship should be sent out at once to join Hawke. Only two of the twelve in home ports were actually in a condition to sail, and these he proposed to despatch immediately, and to follow them with the others as they were made ready in the next seven or ten days. In spite of his own infirmity—he could still hardly stand owing to his illness—he proposed to sail himself in two days' time. The Admiralty approved of all his proposals and told him he could go as soon as he liked. All was hurry, bustle and delight.

Poor Warren was however to be disappointed. He got down to St Helen's in the 'St George,' but only to find that his spirit was stronger than his body. A few days at sea shewed him that it was out of the question that he could stand a sea cruise, and in a letter broken with sorrow he confessed his inability to serve and requested permission to resign the command. On the 8th September the Admiralty approved his resignation, and appointed Hawke in his stead.

Hawke's instructions ordered him to cruise "diligently with the said ships or so many of them as you shall judge fitting, and to dispose of the whole either jointly or separately, on such station or stations in the mouth of the Channel, Soundings, Bay of Biscay and adjacent parts, as may best answer the ends of protecting the trade of his Majesty's subjects, taking or destroying the ships of war, privateers and other ships and vessels of the enemy, meeting and intercepting their convoys outward and homeward bound, and annoying them by all means in your power." Besides these general instructions, a set of more particular

<sup>1</sup> Hawke had six heavy ships only with him. 'Monmouth,' 70; 'Portland,' 50; 'Gloucester,' 50; 'Windsor,' 60; 'Augusta,' 60; 'Centurion,' 54, and 'Grand Turk,' 20.

directions was given him as to the employment of his force, in which some contrast to the great freedom allowed to Anson will be noticed. These ran as follows:

"Whereas we have by our order of this day appointed you to command a squadron of his Majesty's ships to be employed in the Soundings and seas adjacent, we do in addition thereto hereby require and direct you to cruise with the said squadron or the major part thereof between Ushant and Cape Finisterre, keeping 20 leagues to the westward of each cape, and to make the land of the former every 14 days. And it being absolutely necessary that we should be thoroughly informed of the motions, strength and condition of the enemies' ships at Brest, Rochefort and Ferrol, you are to keep one of your best sailing ships and frigates off each of those places, directing the commander of the ship whenever he procures an intelligence worth notice to send the frigate with an account thereof to you, copies of which and any other information that you may receive, you are forthwith to transmit to us.

"But if at any time you shall judge it proper to keep the ships under your command in any particular latitude within the limits of your station, you are in that case constantly to have one of your cruisers passing between you and each of the before-mentioned capes to be ready to convey such orders or intelligence as we may have occasion to send to you, as also to communicate what is passing between you and those capes.

"But notwithstanding these orders, if you shall receive such intelligence of the motions of the enemy as may make it necessary for you to alter your station, you are at liberty to do so or to pursue them as far as you think proper provided there is any prospect of your coming up with them, taking care to send us an immediate account thereof in so particular a manner that there may be no difficulty in knowing where to find you.

Given, etc., the 8th September, 1747.

Vere Beauclerk. Anson. W. Ellis.

Thanks to Warren's promptitude, ships quickly streamed out to join Hawke. Five of the line under Mostyn left St Helen's on September 8th, five more and two 50-gun ships were leaving Plymouth, a 60 was being sent to look into Ferrol and then join him, and four more ships<sup>1</sup> were at Portsmouth victualling and cleaning in order to follow as soon as possible. If all these could reach him in time Hawke would have no fewer than 17 of the line and six 50-gun ships, a number which on paper looks prodigious to oppose no more than nine French ships; but in reality it was not so. At least six of Hawke's ships needed to come in to harbour to clean, and if the French should defer their sailing he would have to send away still more. The Western Squadron was a powerful weapon, but it was also a very expensive one.

As matters turned out the French did not sail immediately, and Hawke ere long became anxious that after all he might be beaten by circumstances. He cruised for 18 days in his station to the westward of Belleisle, and then, fearing that some of the many merchant ships which sighted him might inform the enemy of his whereabouts,

<sup>1</sup> A 90, a 60, a 50 and a 40.

he thought it best to quit that position for a few days in order to tempt the enemy out. Leaving the 'Grand Turk' to give information of his new station to any ships that might come to join him, he therefore beat down to Cape Ortegal, where he cruised close in shore on August 30th to play the old trick and "give the people on shore reason to believe we were cruising off there<sup>1</sup>." He intended to stay only so long as to crystallise the impression that this was his station, and allow the rumour to reach the French. But the news he got there modified his plans about returning to Belleisle. It seemed clear that a large merchant fleet was fitting out at Rochelle for the West Indies. "I think the most effectual method to intercept them," he wrote, "would be cruising with a squadron (if we can't have two) between the latitudes of 42° 30' and 44° at a tolerable distance to the westward. By taking this measure, if they should gain intelligence of us, they could never know well how to avoid us." Having shewn himself here for about three days, he returned to the northward and took up his station again. Still there were no signs of the enemy, nor had he yet seen Warren whom he was daily expecting to join him; and after a short stay in the Bay he beat back to Ortegal in the hopes of finding his Commander-in-Chief. Here he arrived on September 26th and met the reinforcement which Captain Fox had brought out,—a very welcome meeting; and he learned by letters from Warren and the Admiralty that the command had now been vested in himself. Warren's letter gave him the latest information, telling him among other things of the expected arrival at Cadiz of Spanish galleons that year, and of the preparations being made to escort the merchant fleet from Rochelle. Notwithstanding his superiority to the French escort, as reported, Hawke did not consider it desirable to divide his force with the object of intercepting both fleets; "I think our only views at present," he wrote on October 6th, "must be to lay in the way of the French convoy outward bound. . . as to the galleons as it is uncertain when they will come home and likewise impossible for me to divide my force in the present necessitous condition of the ships under my command, we must lay aside all thoughts of them this cruise. . . . The principal point first to be followed is to use our utmost endeavours to intercept the convoy bound out from Rochelle." In order to ensure doing this and attaining a decisive result, he ordered five of his ships which he had intended sending back to harbour, to fill up with water and provisions from the reinforcing ships and remain out longer. "Its true," he wrote, "it may necessitate all of us going into port sooner than we might else

<sup>1</sup> He did much the same in 1755. See Corbett, *England in the Seven Years' War*, vol. I. p. 69.

have done, but as it is of material consequence to the nation that we should be full match for the enemy in case of meeting with them. I am in hopes what I have done will meet with their Lordships' approbation<sup>1</sup>."

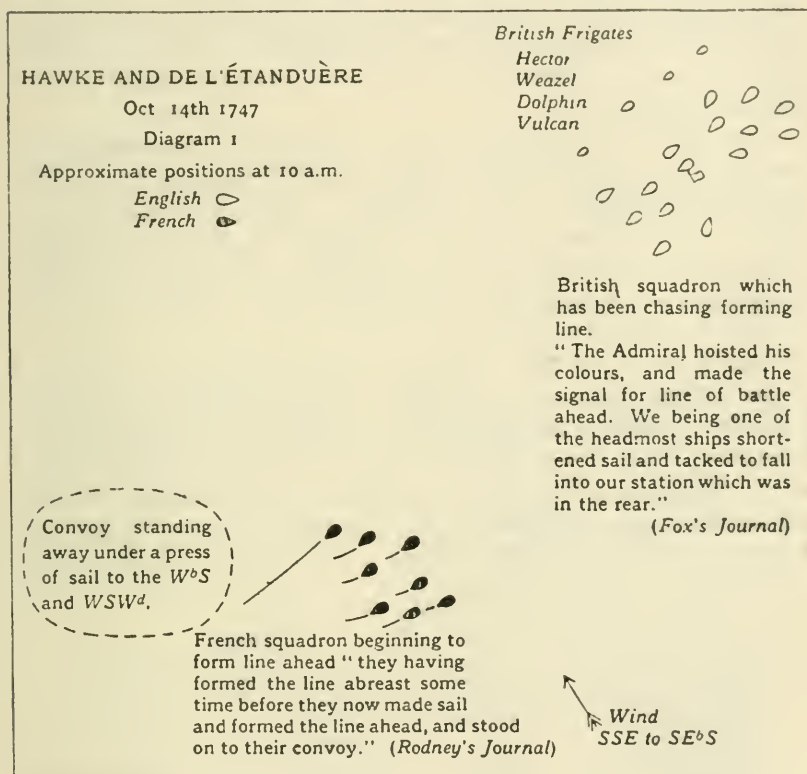
Hawke's fixity of purpose had its reward. Taking his station off Ortegale, he continued cruising with a squadron of varying strength in the probable track of the convoy; and though sickness was beginning, beer stinking, and many ships very foul, he managed to keep together 14 sail—or just over half the total number actually belonging to his command—until the day when they were needed.

At daylight on October 14th the squadron was cruising in a loose order, the ships in scattered formation, when the 'Edinburgh,' which was ahead of the squadron, made the signal for seeing seven ships in the S.W. quarter<sup>2</sup>. Hawke at once signalled a general chase, reefs were shaken out and the British ships crowded towards the strangers. The spars of other vessels soon lifted above the horizon and before an hour had passed the sails of a vast fleet could be made out from the mastheads of the leading ships. By 9 A.M. a great convoy could be clearly seen, lying to on the port tack with the wind at about S.S.E. The British squadron drew up rapidly. At 10 o'clock it was within four miles of the enemy. Hawke then stopped the chase and made the signal for the line of battle ahead with the larboard tacks on board. At the same time the 'Princess Louisa,' one of the leading ships, reported that the enemy had 11 of the line. The 'Kent,' Captain Fox, made out 12; and as the flagship passed her to windward, Fox, having backed his maintopsail to fall into his station in the rear of the line, hailed Hawke and so informed him, to which the Admiral replied that the 'Louisa' had counted 11 and that as soon as line was formed he intended to attack the enemy. It proved a tedious process. During the three hours' chase, the foul ships had dropped astern and the squadron had become greatly strung out, so that by half-past 10 it was still unformed. At that time the French convoy was seen to bear away to the westward

<sup>1</sup> The suggestion that Warren was actuated by prize money in drawing attention to the galleons, and that Hawke took a higher view and thought only about meeting the enemy's men-of-war (see Burrow's *Life of Hawke*, p. 177) is wholly unjust to Warren and misleading as to the strategy. Both officers had the same end in view—the interception of the enemy's trade. The outward bound West Indian convoy was, as a matter of fact, a prize the value of which was prodigious. If prize money were in either man's mind (and there is no reason to suppose that it was), the more favourable objective would be the French convoy, since it was known to be about to sail, while the arrival of the galleons was problematical.

<sup>2</sup> Hawke's despatch and the Journal of 'Devonshire,' give the bearing as S.E. but this is obviously a clerical error. The Journals of all the other ships, including 'Edinburgh' give it as S.W.

under a crowd of sail, and the men-of-war appeared to be drawing into a line on a wind and following them<sup>1</sup>. Seeing the enemy making away Hawke delayed no longer but hauled down the signal for the line and substituted that for general chase, at the same time signalling to the captains of the 'Princess Louisa' and 'Defiance' to speak. He appears to have given some verbal directions to these officers, but unfortunately no record of these is to be found.



The French squadron, which was under the command of de l'Étandière, consisted of eight ships of the line. Besides this there was a 60-gun East Indiaman, the 'Content,' and some frigates, all of which the French Commander ordered to join the convoy, thereby diminishing his fighting force by one ship at least whose strength was by no means

<sup>1</sup> Rodney, in his Journal says that the enemy "having formed the line abreast some time before, they now made sail and stood after the convoy." Other observers believed the enemy to be in line ahead.

negligible<sup>1</sup>. The squadron was formed in line under topsails and fore-sails and to begin with stood close hauled, while the convoy bore up and steered about four points from the wind.

What considerations affected de l'Étandière's choice as to how he should meet the situation cannot be said. Hawke, he could see, was keeping close by the wind and it must very soon have been evident that the British attack was going to be made upon the men-of-war and not upon the convoy. It appears that the French Admiral stood by the wind long enough to give himself the weather gage, and then steered to keep his squadron across the British line of approach towards his convoy, laying only so much to windward as was necessary to retain the weather gage.

The action which followed was, as an action in chase must be, a confused one. Each British captain engaged whichever ship of the enemy he first came up with, fought her until a fresh ship came up from astern and then passed along the line to engage the next ahead. The manner in which the British 60-gun ships attacked their heavier antagonists and fought them successively, was as admirable as anything in the history of the navy.

Owing to the position taken up by de l'Étandière the greater part of the British squadron was obliged to engage the enemy to windward; some few, however, among these the 'Monmouth' and 'Edinburgh,' were able to fetch to windward and engage to leeward, and thus it came about that the rear ships of the French line found themselves attacked simultaneously on both sides at once, sometimes by two, occasionally by as many as three British ships<sup>2</sup>, a concentration of effort which

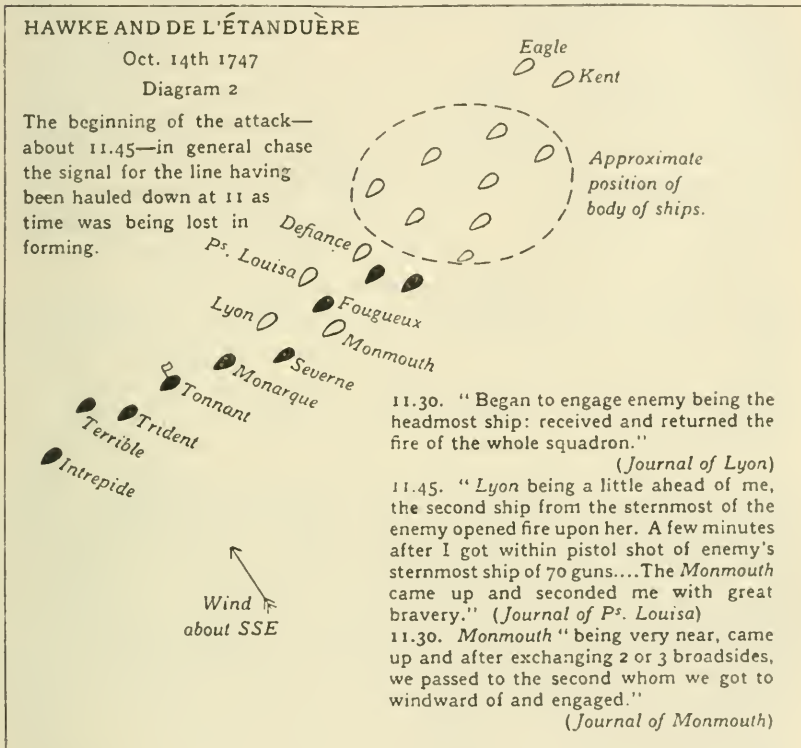
<sup>1</sup> The British and French squadrons were as follows:

BRITISH		FRENCH	
'Devonshire' (flag) ...	66 guns	'Tonnant' (flag) ...	80 guns
'Kent' ... ..	64 "	'Intrépide' ... ..	74 "
'Edinburgh' ... ..	70 "	'Terrible' ... ..	74 "
'Yarmouth' ... ..	64 "	'Monarque' ... ..	74 "
'Monmouth' ... ..	70 "	'Neptune' ... ..	58 "
'Princess Louisa' ...	60 "	'Trident' ... ..	64 "
'Windsor' ... ..	60 "	'Fougueux' ... ..	64 "
'Lyon' ... ..	60 "	'Severne' ... ..	50 "
'Tilbury' ... ..	60 "	'Content' (E.I. ship)	60 "
'Nottingham' ... ..	60 "		
'Defiance' ... ..	60 "		
'Eagle' ... ..	60 "		
'Gloucester' ... ..	50 "		
'Portland' ... ..	50 "		
'Hector' ... ..	44 "		

<sup>2</sup> M. Castex in his description of the tactics of the action, makes Hawke attack in two columns, as though by design. This however is not correct. *Les idées militaires du XVIII<sup>ième</sup> siècle.*

neutralised the heavier individual force of the enemy. Yet notwithstanding this well-delivered attack the 'Neptune,' 58, which was originally the rear ship of the French line, fought from half past 11 until about half past 3 in the afternoon—a measure of the gallant resistance offered by the enemy.

The 'Lyon' was the first British ship in action. Passing to leeward of the 'Neptune' she ran the whole length of the French line. She received so many shot between wind and water in the early stages of



the action that she had to haul out of line to stop her leaks; but this done, she came into action again as close as she was able. She reached the head of the line after four hours' fighting and then went about in order to gain the wind, double on the enemy, and repeat her attack on the other side. Close astern of the 'Lyon' came the 'Princess Louisa.' She also engaged the 'Neptune' to windward, seconded by the 'Monmouth,' which engaged the Frenchman on the other side. So soon as the other British ships began to arrive the 'Princess Louisa' made sail to give them room, and, like the 'Lyon,' passed along the line, tacked

and got to windward, and placing herself on the weather bow of the leading ship—the ‘Terrible’<sup>1</sup>—engaged her for about an hour, when the arrival of Hawke in the ‘Devonshire’ upon her lee quarter forced the French ship to strike.

The ‘Defiance’ followed in the same manner, passing along the French line to leeward and engaging within pistol shot every ship, except the ‘Severne,’ 50, which was too far to windward. Like the others, she tacked and doubled when she reached the head of the line.

The order in which the remaining ships came into action is uncertain. They did not all strike the rear ships. The ‘Hector,’ a 44-gun frigate, cut in abreast the ‘Fougueux,’ 64, the ‘Portland,’ 50, abreast the ‘Monarque,’ 74, the ‘Yarmouth’ and ‘Devonshire,’ close together, abreast the ‘Severne’—a 50-gun ship which could make but a short resistance to the broadsides of the two British 64’s. The ‘Edinburgh’ cut through between the ‘Fougueux’ and ‘Severne,’ engaging the two rear ships to leeward, the ‘Severne’ and ‘Monarque’ to windward as she passed between them. The ‘Eagle’ and ‘Kent,’ which were the two rear ships of the British squadron, came up close together, the ‘Eagle’ a little to windward of the ‘Kent’ and slightly abaft her beam. Captain Fox first intended to run to leeward of the enemy, slipping in ahead of the ‘Eagle,’ but some of his officers saying, “if we edge away we must be foul of the Eagle and she must fire into us,” he luffed and manned his lee guns, giving orders to them to fire as soon as they would bear, at the same time backing his mizen topsail to let the ‘Eagle’ draw up to his bow. Hawke, seeing the ‘Kent’s’ topsail aback, at once threw out her signal<sup>2</sup>, and Fox made sail again, fetched the ‘Neptune,’ bore up and passed under her stern and raked her, then stretched on to the ‘Fougueux’ which was at the moment disengaged, raked her and shot along her lee side and there engaged her for three-quarters of an hour. The ‘Hector’ at the same time placed herself on the ‘Fougueux’s’ lee quarter and fired six or seven broadsides into her, when she struck. Fox then passed on to the ‘Neptune,’ which in the interval had drawn ahead of the ‘Fougueux,’ and resumed his action with her, broadside to broadside.

By about 1.30, after two hours of fighting, the resistance of the rear ships of the French line shewed evidence of weakening; the ‘Severne’ and ‘Fougueux’ had surrendered, the ‘Neptune’ and ‘Monarque’ were so shattered that they had no hope of keeping up with the rest of the

<sup>1</sup> The ‘Intrépide’ which led in the line of battle had tacked at the same time as the ‘Lyon.’

<sup>2</sup> Fox explained that the mizen topsail was kept aback eight or ten minutes longer than he had intended owing to the crew of the gun under the gangway having unrove the cross jack brace which was in the way of working the gun.



squadron. Yet so stubborn was their defence that it was not until half past three, when having received the fire of nearly all the British ships, their masts gone and their decks choked with wounded and dead, they surrendered, the 'Neptune' to the 'Eagle' and 'Yarmouth,' the 'Monarque' to the 'Nottingham' and 'Edinburgh.'

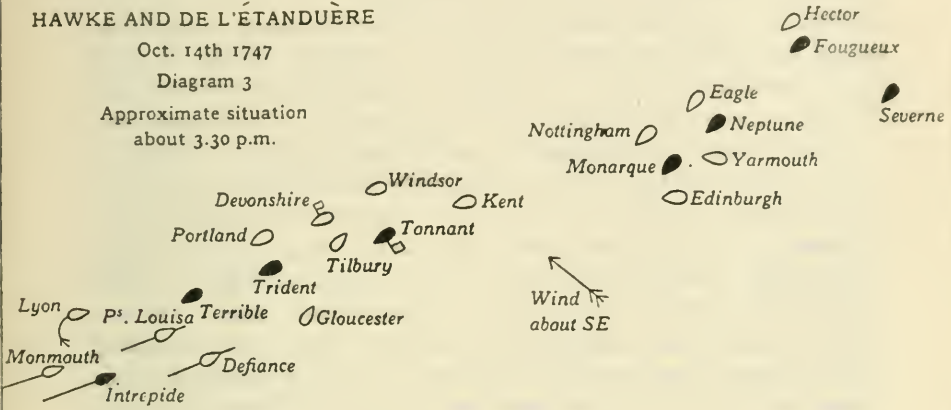
At about 2.30 the 'Eagle' had had her wheel, tiller ropes, bowlines and most of her rigging shot away. These damages threw her out of

### HAWKE AND DE L'ÉTAN DUÈRE

Oct. 14th 1747

Diagram 3

Approximate situation  
about 3.30 p.m.



"We engaged the *Tonnant*, but the breechings of our lower deck guns breaking obliged us to shoot ahead." (*Journal of Devonshire*)

"We obliged the headmost ship to tack, and tacked after him." (*Journal of Monmouth*)

"The enemy's headmost ship of 74 guns tacked, and finding I could weather the second of the same force, I tacked got to windward of him, bore down close to him and gave him my broadside, then wore and stood after him." (*Journal of Ps. Louisa*)

"Wore, the ship refusing stays, made sail on the other tack to gain the wind." (*Journal of Lyon*)

"The *Tilbury* seeing the *Tonnant* firing at the *Devonshires* rigging, stood on the other tack between *Devonshire* and *Tonnant*." (*Hawke's despatch*)

"She (the *Neptune*) struck her colours.....discharged our broadside at a ship laying ahead of *Neptune*, who in a little time struck her colours." (*Journal of Yarmouth*)

control and caused her to fall on board the 'Devonshire,' then coming up from engaging the 'Severne,' and to carry away her jibboom and spritsail yard, forcing Hawke to bear up to clear himself. So soon as he was clear of the 'Eagle' Hawke stood for the French flagship, a fine 80-gun ship, ran alongside her to leeward and engaged. But at the first broadside the breechings of the 'Devonshire's' lower deck guns carried away—there was a 6 to 7 knot breeze blowing and the ships being on a wind lay along considerably—and Hawke was obliged to shoot ahead to repair breechings. The 'Kent' at this moment was

leaving the surrendered 'Fougueux,' and Hawke made her signal, intending her to engage the 'Tonnant.' This Fox did, passing under the French flagship's stern and engaging her for some time, during which he shot away her main and mizen topmasts so reducing her sail that the 'Kent' shot ahead. Fox thereupon hauled up his foresail and squared his foreyard to back alongside her. At the same time the 'Tilbury,' which had completed the circuit of the van, came up and engaged the 'Tonnant' to windward, by so doing covering the 'Devonshire' while she repaired her damages.

Hawke, seeing the 'Kent' was ahead of the 'Tonnant,' signalled to her to make sail ahead and engage the 'Trident.' Such, at least, was his intention, but his actual signal was only the 'Kent's' number. How this was to be interpreted was the question. "Our signal was seen out on board the Admiral," wrote Fox in his Journal, "which my officers believed and insisted on was to make sail up to close him, as no ship was then near him and the ship I had just been engaged with ['Tonnant'] disabled, and four ships astern coming up, made me readily agree to the opinions of my officers and accordingly we made sail after him and hauled aboard the fore and main tacks." For this conduct, arising from a misinterpretation of the signal, and for backing his mizen topsail at the beginning of the action, Fox was tried by court martial and found guilty of misconduct, due, the court agreed, not in any way to want of courage, "but seems to proceed from his listening to the persuasions of the first lieutenant and master and giving weight to them." Keppel afterwards declared that Fox was in no way to blame, but was the victim of those officers—"two damned bad fellows" who were bent on ruining him.

When his new breechings were rove, Hawke again made sail and drew up to the 'Trident,' which struck to him about 5 o'clock. At the same time the French Admiral, badly disabled aloft, but not much damaged below as her thick sides had kept out the light shot of the British guns, bore up and stood away before the wind. The 'Intrépide,' being the leading ship and somewhat to windward, had suffered least of the French squadron, had returned through the British ships in a most admirable manner in order to support the Admiral, and now, when the flagship bore up, she covered her retreat. Seeing the two French ships making away, Hawke, who had passed on from the 'Trident' to the 'Terrible' and was about to engage her, signalled to the 'Lyon,' 'Tilbury' and 'Kent' to follow them; but the signal does not appear to have been seen. Rodney, however, who was coming up in the 'Eagle' from the surrendered 'Neptune,' bore away after them without orders, followed in close succession by the 'Yarmouth' and

'Nottingham.' He overhauled the two French ships about 7, and engaged them single-handed for half an hour before he was joined by the two other British ships. But both 'Yarmouth' and 'Nottingham' being disabled, the chase was abandoned and the two French survivors reached Brest in safety.

When dark fell, all the French ships except the flagship and her second had surrendered. The British squadron was greatly scattered. Hawke therefore brought to and set about repairing damages, which were considerable. A council of war was called next morning to discuss whether the two French ships should be pursued, and it was agreed that "four ships, the least of them of 60 guns, could only be sufficient to go in quest of the two French ships, the *Tonnant*, 80, and *Intrépide*, 74, which had escaped," but that none of the British ships were fit to go; by the time they could be made ready it would be too late, as the enemy would have made good his escape.

The convoy was also clear. Hawke had not for a moment entertained the idea of sending any of his ships of the line after the merchantmen until he had accounted for the escorting men-of-war, and he considered it would be imprudent to send frigates only as there were several large ships, as well as the '*Content*,' among the convoy. But he despatched the '*Weazel*' sloop to the Commodore in the Leeward Islands to warn him that the French ships were coming. The reception which they met with off Martinique was, however, not due only to the '*Weazel*,' which arrived but one day ahead of the first of the convoy, but also to information from the Admiralty of its sailing. Hawke did not limit the usefulness of the '*Weazel*' to the Leeward Islands, but gave permission for her to be sent on to Jamaica if the Commodore should consider it desirable, so that all the British forces in the West Indian area might be warned and steps taken to complete the business which the Western Squadron had so effectually begun.

The actions of Anson and Hawke furnish examples of the limitations of the convoy system. While the British usually supplemented the oceanic escort by the Channel squadron until the convoy was clear of the danger area—that part of the route flanked by Brest—the French did not always do so. Their escort was thus inferior to the force which the British could put out from their western harbours. The French used no scouting to warn the convoy of the approach of superior force and give it opportunity to escape. On the other hand the British, by their intelligence system and from reports which could be gathered at sea, were able to know when convoys were preparing to sail or to return, and thus to mass their ships for an attack. Thus, while the French policy of evasion might, and did indeed for long prove successful,

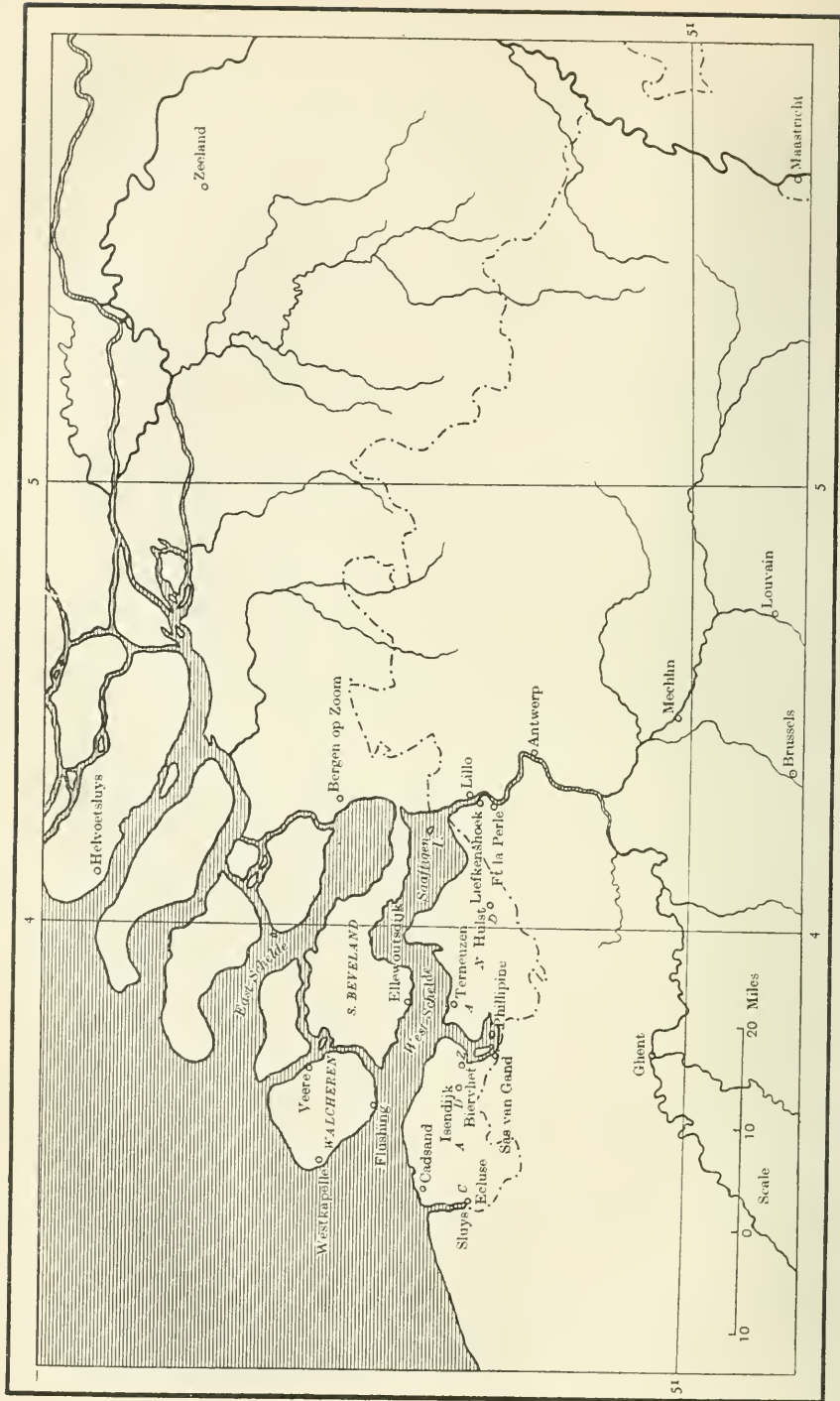
once a systematic cruising system of a strong squadron was established on the route of the convoys an eventual catastrophe was inevitable.

These sweeping victories of Anson and Hawke, while they removed all danger to the Kingdom or its colonies, had likewise a high value in relation to the European war. On the continent France had carried all before her. The Low Countries were in her hand, the redoubtable fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom had fallen and Holland lay at her mercy. But France herself was ruined. Her commerce was stopped, her great sources of revenue in the West Indies were sealed, and her manufactories were closing for want of many of the raw materials to keep them supplied. The workmen in all parts were starving, largely owing to an unprecedentedly bad harvest, and the distress in the country was beyond description. Notwithstanding her victories on land France could only look on, impotent, while a British expedition was preparing to sail to capture her East Indian possessions, and the British squadrons in the West Indies were being reinforced with ships now available from home, which would complete the destruction of French power in the Caribbean Sea. Louisbourg, strengthened against attack and capable of supporting itself, needed only the help of another squadron in the spring to secure the command of the St Lawrence and strangle such trade as could creep through the British squadrons at home. Although France could still keep her population from actual starvation she could not pay her soldiers; while important sources of French wealth and prosperity were on the verge of passing into the hands of her most formidable commercial rival. The pressure of which this situation was the result was being exercised by the main squadrons of the British navy.

At the same time a measure of direct assistance had been rendered by the same service in the continental campaign, where a flotilla had delayed a part of the operations of the French army in Holland, and for the time being had assisted to preserve the island of Walcheren, with its important port of Flushing to the Dutch. The preceding narrative has shewn how, by the end of 1746, the whole of the Austrian Netherlands was in the hands of the French armies. One hundred and forty thousand troops under Marshal Saxe were encamped between Bruges, Antwerp and Brussels; they were faced by an allied force of one hundred and twenty thousand British, Dutch, Austrian, Hessian and Hanoverian troops. Both in numbers and centralisation of command the advantage lay with the enemy.

Hitherto Holland had taken no part in the war except in the minor rôle of an auxiliary. Louis XV now decided that Holland should be detached from the side of the allies, constrained to withdraw her naval and military support, and to deny England the use of those harbours





THE SCHELDE

where the British troops were landed on the continent. Holland was therefore informed, in a despatch dated April 17th, 1747, that the French King regretted that he found himself under the necessity of invading Dutch territory.

With the main body of the French army in the neighbourhood of Brussels, Louvain and Mechlin, Marshal Saxe constituted two separate corps under the orders of Lowendahl and de Contades, to invade Dutch Flanders. The former was to attack Ecluse and Sas de Gand; the latter, Forts Perle and Liefkenshoek on the left bank of the Scheldt. The invasion of Zeeland was the object of first importance. That portion south of the Scheldt was to be seized, the troops were then to be thrown across the river into Walcheren, and with the mouth of the estuary thus in French hands, and the upper reaches secured by the capture of the Forts, the Scheldt ports would not only be closed to England, but the familiar pistol would be effectively pointed at the British heart.

The Dutch quickly took alarm. Never ready themselves owing to their mercantile preoccupations and divided counsels, they called urgently upon Commodore Matthew Michell, who commanded the Flushing flotilla, for help. Michell was one of those officers who had received his training in that floating school of successful naval commanders, Anson's expedition round the world. He was prompt to respond to the call. Immediately, without waiting for instructions, he collected every small craft of from 24 to 6 guns upon which he could place his hand, and sent them up the Scheldt as far as navigation would permit. But although their own territory was threatened, such was the lack of a common direction of the several states of the United Provinces, that it was long before any effectual measures were taken to second Michell with the local maritime forces. The navy of Zeeland was unready, but its Commander took the step of coming to see Michell to make arrangements for cooperation. But the Admiral of the neighbouring province, Holland, remained imperturbably at Helvoetsluys, and made no move to assist Zeeland although the next bite of the enemy would infallibly absorb his own state.

Marshall Saxe, his preparations well thought out in the winter and his plan of campaign clear in his mind, was hampered by none of these vacillations nor lack of readiness. The protecting forts which formed a line covering the south shore of the Scheldt were quickly invested. Cadzand, Isendijk, Philippine and Sas de Gand soon experienced the bombardment of the heavy batteries with which Saxe had crushed the fortifications in Flanders in the preceding campaign. Cadzand fell nearly at once, and a flotilla of local schuyts and of small armed vessels which had been brought by canal and were under the command of

M. de Lage, prepared to embark the troops and ferry them to Walcheren. The capture of Walcheren meant the seizure of Flushing, one of the essential ports of disembarkation of the British troops; but it meant more besides. It would be the first stepping stone on the way to Helvoetsluys, our principal port of supply to the army in Holland. The prompt appearance of the flotilla under Michell prevented the desired embarkation from being made.

The fortress of Hulst, which stood in the line of an advance of the French and commanded the approaches to the river east of Terneuzen, although reinforced by three English battalions under General Fuller, made but a poor defence, so poor indeed that the Dutch Commander of the place was suspected of treachery, but the flotilla was able to remove the garrison in security and transport it to Flushing. Before long the whole of Dutch territory south of the Scheldt was in French hands. While, however, this was proceeding the Dutch navies were awaking from their lethargy, and before very long a squadron of 37 Dutch vessels was assisting the 20 English in the defence of their own country. The forts below Antwerp did not give in so soon as Hulst had done, and so long as they held out the flotilla was able to work in the river; but they also fell in time. French batteries were erected at the narrow reaches of the river and the British vessels were constrained to withdraw to the broader waters where the artillery could not reach them. Here their command was complete, and the French detachments at Cadzand and Sluys, consisting of about 4500 men, were rendered inactive. No embarkation could be made at Terneuzen to attack South Beveland, and the operations of the whole of this French force of some 27,000 men were brought to a standstill. The attempt to pass into Holland in this direction was finally abandoned in June, when Lowendahl turned to the N.E. and took his army to Bergen-op-Zoom, which he invested.

In the defence of this great place the navy could play very little part. Some men were landed—quarter gunners to help to work the guns—and some bomb-vessels and sloops contributed their fire, but the defence was inadequate to defeat the attack. Bergen-op-Zoom fell. With the fall of the fortress the naval share in these local operations ceased; but the navy had performed an important service. The rapidity with which Michell appeared in the Scheldt, his prompt distribution of his vessels and his whole-hearted cooperation with his dilatory allies were the salvation of the western provinces of Holland, a salvation which was not without its effect when the question of restitution of territory at the peace came to be discussed.

Thus the year 1747 ended with things in a better condition than



any previous year of the war. The French navy was so crippled by the victories of Anson and Hawke that all fear of invasion was dispelled. Louisbourg was secure. French trade was still sailing, but in very small quantities and at the price of exorbitant insurance rates largely paid to British insurance agents. An army was on its way to reduce the French settlements in India, and the invasion of Canada was still in contemplation.

While this was the position on and over the sea, the situation on the Continent, though dark, was not without hope. In Italy there was a pause, each side in possession of its own territories. Flanders was still in the hands of the French, and there seemed small hope of expelling them, but their invasion of Holland had progressed only so far as the capture of Bergen-op-Zoom and the investment of Maastricht—no inconsiderable gain it is true but not so serious as it might have been. The French held the south bank of the Scheldt, the Dutch the north; but Helvoetsluys and Flushing were still secure, and if the French invasion were to continue in the following year it would be conducted under less favourable conditions than at the beginning of the campaign in 1747; a lengthening line of communications, a more prepared Dutch people, and a constant threat of counterstroke from the sea flank, would combine to make success more difficult to attain.

#### APPENDIX

While the Western Squadron during the year 1747 was acting as a body operating against the main French fleet and the principal French trade, detached ships were cruising in the Channel against the privateers which infested it from Scilly to Dover. In spite of the extent of the British command of the sea these craft were never wholly eradicated; but the cruising ships were able considerably to lessen the damage they did to trade. The following list, taken from the *London Gazette*, does not represent, probably, the whole of the privateers captured, but it gives an indication of the ships employed upon their suppression, the types of privateers and the neighbourhoods they affected.

## French privateers taken in home waters during 1747

Where taken	Date	Privateer	Guns	Men	By whom taken
W. Channel	About Feb. 5	'Bellone'	36.12	340	'Eagle,' 'Nottingham' and 'Edinburgh'
Channel	February 22	'Tygre'	26	220	'Falkland'
W. Channel	March 1	'Loup' (late 'Wolf' sloop)	18	110	'Amazon,' 'Grand Turk'
Off Scilly	" 4	'Comte de Lowendahl'	20	not stated	'Hampton Court' and others
Off C. Clear	April 9	'Mary Magdalen' <sup>1</sup>	26	304	Anson's squadron
—	" 13	'Alexandre'	20.20	240	'Southsea Castle' and 'Idebay'
Off Portland	May 5	'Deux Couronnes'	24	270	'Gloucester'
W. Channel	June 4	'Revenge' <sup>2</sup>	22	230	'Maidstone'
W. Boulogne	" 16	'Lightning'	24	265	'Gloucester,' 'Falkland'
Off St Albans	" 24	'Duchesse de Villars'	4.6	40	'Hastings'
Soundings	July 2	'Renard'	1.5	29	'Jamaica' sloop
Off Ireland	September 13	'Renommée' (man-of-war)	32	not stated	'Dover,' Hampshire and 'Bridgewater'
—	October 6	'La Tourterelle'	14	74	'Tygre' (privateer)
Near Brest	" 11	'Grand Bayone of Bilboa' <sup>3</sup>	24	not stated	'Hampshire'
60 leagues S.W. } from C. Clear }	November 5	'Castor' (man-of-war)	25	"	'Bridgewater'
Soundings	" 3	'Jason'	18	"	'Dover'
"	" 16	'Jean Frederick'	22	"	'Hampshire'
40 leagues S.S.W. } from C. Clear }	" 22	'Heureux'	16	"	'Anglesea'
North Sea	" 27	'Extravagant' of S. Sebastian	8	120	'Flamborough'
—	December 10	Four small privateers of Calais and Dunkirk	14 to 10 guns	—	'Hampton Court'
—	" 7	'Grand San Juan' of S. Sebastian	—	—	'Hampton Court'
—	" 9	'Thetis' of Bayonne	20	220	'Hampton Court'

<sup>1</sup> This ship had been out for four months and had taken 15 British ships.<sup>2</sup> This ship had four prizes which were retaken by 'Gloucester,' May 31.<sup>3</sup> This ship had taken 120 prizes during the war.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUDING OPERATIONS IN THE WEST INDIES, 1747-48

AT Louisbourg, when it was definitely known that d'Anville's squadron had left the coast of Canada and returned to Europe, Admiral Townsend immediately prepared in accordance with his instructions to take home as many ships as possible. The winter was now coming on, there was a large volume of trade to escort, and it was necessary to hasten his departure before the ice should shut him in. He therefore got away as soon as he possibly could—actually within four days of receiving the news—with all the ships which he considered were no longer required on the station<sup>1</sup>, leaving Knowles in command. The 'Norwich,' 'Canterbury' and 'Hind' were sent to the West Indies to cruise for the winter season, with orders to return to Louisbourg by March 20th at the latest, and the remaining small craft were sent to scour the coast for the small French vessels which were reported to have been left behind by d'Anville's fleet. Hard weather with frost and snow was well established by the end of November; a week later the harbour was completely frozen up. No danger of any kind was now to be expected until the winter was over.

With the spring of 1747 Knowles found himself in a precarious situation, since Lee, who commanded in the Leeward Islands, detained the ships which had been temporarily detached. Louisbourg, therefore, dependent upon Boston for its supplies, was for some time in danger of being cut off by privateers working from the St Lawrence. The French merchants of Quebec had fitted out four 30- to 36-gun ships for commerce attack and protection and with these they threatened the communications with Boston. At the same time the French opened a land campaign with energy. A force of 500 Canadians invaded Acadia as soon as the travelling permitted, under the command of M. de Ramsay. A base was established at Bay Vert where the vessels with stores and ammunition assembled, and a further 1500 men were prepared in Quebec to join de Ramsay as soon as the navigation of the river should permit, while yet another force was reported to be coming from France. "I have not only the fisheries of Newfoundland, Acadia and Nova Scotia to guard," wrote Knowles on April 30th, "but also the mouth

<sup>1</sup> 'Pembroke,' 60; 'Kingston,' 60; 'Hampshire,' 50; 'Dover,' 44; 'Kinsale,' 44; 'Hinchinbrook' sloop and 'Louisbourg' fireship.

of the St Lawrence, the trade to the several colonies and the protection of Louisbourg." A constant cruising squadron was necessary at the mouth of the St Lawrence to prevent the enemy from sending supplies to Quebec, and, from the point of view of Acadia, to intercept the stores and reinforcements which were being carried to de Ramsay's force at Bay Vert. In order to interrupt these communications Knowles ordered the 'Comet' bomb and a schooner to endeavour to seize Gaspé Bay; but the place was found to be strongly intrenched and his vessels were driven off with some loss<sup>1</sup>.

The 'Norwich' and 'Canterbury' did not rejoin Knowles until May, so that throughout all the early spring months his actions were cramped for want of ships. Even upon their arrival he was unable to effect any service of great value, for a stronger squadron than that under his command was needed to carry out offensive operations against French commerce. The French ships going to Quebec and those returning from the West and East Indies might have been the objectives of his attacks if he had had the necessary force; but for the lack of such force the full benefits of our possession of Louisbourg were not obtained. During this year Knowles usually kept one or two ships cruising on the Bank of Newfoundland, one or more off the St Lawrence, and some small craft about Bay Vert to harass de Ramsay. These ships, together with the reliefs necessary to maintain them, while they absorbed his whole squadron were insufficient seriously to distress French trade. Thus the French military operations on shore materially assisted in the protection of their commerce in the open sea—an example, constantly recurring in all wars, of the defensive value of a minor counter offensive.

The French invasion of Acadia was brought to an end by a combination of causes, partly tactical, partly strategical. In a tactical sense Acadia owed its security to the stubborn defence offered by the garrison of Annapolis; in a strategical sense its safety was due partly to the cruisers in the St Lawrence and off Bay Vert, which, though they did not intercept all supplies, hampered them considerably; but still more to the defeat of de la Jonquière by Anson off Finisterre on May 3rd. This was the final blow. The reinforcements upon which de Ramsay was depending to complete his reconquest were scattered. Many of the vessels bearing them returned to France; few, if any, got to Canada. So soon as the news of the French defeat reached Quebec it was there realized that the invasion was no longer possible, and de Ramsay was at once recalled<sup>2</sup>. This furnishes an excellent example of the functions

<sup>1</sup> Log of 'Comet.' Also In letters, Knowles.

<sup>2</sup> Knowles to Admiralty, August 31st, 1747.





THEATRE OF OPERATIONS OF THE



AMERICA SQUADRON, 1747-1748





of garrisons, local squadrons and the main fleet, and a corroboration of the dictum expressed by the Admiralty in 1756, that inasmuch as it was impossible to keep a force at each, or perhaps at any, of our oversea dominions equal to what the enemy might send thither, "the best, indeed the only, security arises from a detention of the enemy's strength in their ports<sup>1</sup>."

After de Ramsay's recall the operations conducted from Louisbourg were confined to cruising against the French trade. In August Knowles received the appointment to command on the Jamaica station<sup>2</sup>. He remained in Cape Breton until October, and when no further danger to the fortress was to be expected he went into Boston on his way south to confer with Shirley as to the defence of the coast of Nova Scotia. It was arranged between them that 400 of the American troops should be retained in pay as a garrison for Nova Scotia and that a ship should remain at Louisbourg for the winter. Having made these arrangements Knowles sailed for Barbados on November 30th, taking with him the 'Canterbury,' 'Norwich,' 'Lark,' 'Fowey' and 'Achilles' (sloop), together with the West Indian trade, reaching Barbados on November 28th. From this time to the end of the war no further operations of consequence took place in the North American and Canadian theatre.

On arrival at Barbados Knowles first joined his force to that on the Leeward Island station under Admiral Pocock<sup>3</sup>, and then, after a short cruise in his company, he bore up for Jamaica to take over his command, as ships were not needed.

The new Commander-in-Chief arrived at Jamaica on January 27th, 1748. The whole Jamaica squadron under Captain Digby Dent was lying in port, the ships in various stages of readiness<sup>4</sup>. The information as to the Spaniards showed most of their ships to be at Havana under Reggio, three 74's, four 64's and two 54's being in commission, two new 70's nearly ready for sea, and two 80-gun ships on the stocks. Of smaller craft there were reported to be two 14-gun ships and nineteen privateers actually at sea and another twelve of the latter making ready. The Spanish strategy presented no great problems; they used their ships of

<sup>1</sup> Navy Records Society, vol. XLII. p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> Dated June 5th, 1747. The date appears to correspond with the reception of the news of Digby Dent's indecisive action with de la Motte, and with the receipt of a letter from him to Anson (B.M. Add. MS. 15956, f. 136) asking that he might go to the West Indies as the cold of Louisbourg was killing him.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> 'Lenox,' 'Worcester,' 'Plymouth,' 'Cornwall,' 'Elizabeth,' 'Biddeford,' 'Enterprise,' 'Drake' and 'Merlin' in different states of repair: 'Strafford,' 'Rye,' 'Experiment,' 'Vulture,' 'Vainqueur' and 'Weazel' preparing for sea.

force as escorts for the treasure fleets and their small craft, nearly all of which were privateers, for attack on British trade.

Since the war with France had been in progress Spanish commerce had enjoyed comparative immunity, for the bulk of the British squadron had been employed either convoying the Jamaica fleets or endeavouring to attack the French convoys to and from Hispaniola. The distance which separated the Spanish lines of trade from those of France had made it difficult to pay close attention to both. A considerable force was known to be necessary to deal with the strong convoys which escorted the fleets from the Havana over the danger area, and sufficient ships were not available to maintain one cruising squadron off the Tortuga Bank and another off Cape François.

As soon as possible after his arrival Knowles held a consultation with Trelawny as to the manner in which they should cooperate in the conduct of the war. The Admiral, although he is credited with being the author of the recriminatory pamphlet on the Cartagena expedition in which the conduct of the army was severely censured, was nevertheless an officer who most fully appreciated the importance of cordial relations and cooperation between the services. He did not in any way underestimate the necessity for a land as well as a sea force. All his letters indeed point to his being strongly in favour of an energetic combined employment. In this case, his opinion was that the best way to attack the enemy's trade was to supplement cruising warfare by attacks upon the trading centres and privateer bases—a policy which had not been employed since his own repulses at La Guayra and Puerto Cabello.

As a result of the consultation it was decided on February 2nd to attack Santiago de Cuba, and for this purpose 240 men of Trelawny's regiment were to embark on board the squadron. The main body of ships of force was ordered to prepare to sail at once with that object, and the smaller vessels were disposed for cruising—the 'Rye' between Savanilla and Pedro Shoals to intercept French Mississippi ships, the 'Vulture' and 'Vainqueur' off Santiago, the 'Biddeford,' 'Fowey' and 'Aldborough' between the West Caicos and Cape François, and the 'Merlin' to windward of Hispaniola on the track of the trade.

Knowles set out his views as to the sea strategy of the station in a letter which he wrote to the Admiralty after he had been three months in command<sup>1</sup>. In this he described the tracks of the French and Spanish trade and the measures he favoured for attacking it and protecting our own.

He recommended keeping a 40-gun ship cruising off San Domingo

<sup>1</sup> In letters, Knowles, April 20th, 1748. Referred to in vol. I. p. 18.

and along the south side of Hispaniola to protect the outward trade from England against the privateers which operated from the harbours in that part. Such a ship could cruise for ten or twelve weeks at a stretch, as she could wood and water on the coast.

Next, one 20-gun ship and one sloop were to cruise between Cape Tiburon and Cape Maysi to protect North American trade coming through the windward passage and ships passing along the south side of Cuba, against the privateers from the numerous ports on both sides of the windward passage. These two cruisers (which might keep the sea for two months), would also threaten the enemy's trade sailing from Léogane, Petit Guave and Cul-de-Sac.

Two sloops were to be stationed off Santiago, the great privateer base. In this position they would afford protection to the trade along the north of Jamaica. These sloops should cruise in company, as the privateers not uncommonly worked together, sometimes as many as four in a body.

One 40-gun ship and one 20 were wanted for constant convoy service and to protect the trade passing Cartagena, Porto Bello or the South Cays.

One 40-gun ship was required to attend upon Ruatan Island, keeping the garrison supplied and preventing any attack in force from the mainland of Havana.

One ship of 40 guns, one of 20 and a sloop were required for reliefs for any of the above, or for use on a sudden emergency.

This completed the tale of the smaller ships. The ships of the line were to be employed cruising in a squadron of four or five ships off Cape François at all times except the hurricane season. Six weeks or two months being the longest the ships could keep the sea, Knowles advised that eight or nine ships would be the minimum which could perform this service. The most important time was from November to March when the French ships from Europe usually arrived under strong convoy.

If the Spanish outward bound trade were also to be dealt with, a larger number of ships would be wanted in order to provide cruisers off Cartagena, Tiburon, and the north side of Hispaniola; and between Cape Antonio and Cape Catoche. During the hurricane season when the ships had to leave Cape François, they would be free for use against the Spanish trade from Vera Cruz. This trade usually sailed in August and September, and should be intercepted off the Tortugas if possible before the Havana squadron joined, or the ships could get into Havana. But to effect any service against it after it had reached Havana a still stronger force would be needed, as the whole Spanish squadron at that

port usually escorted the merchantmen as far as the latitude of Bermuda.

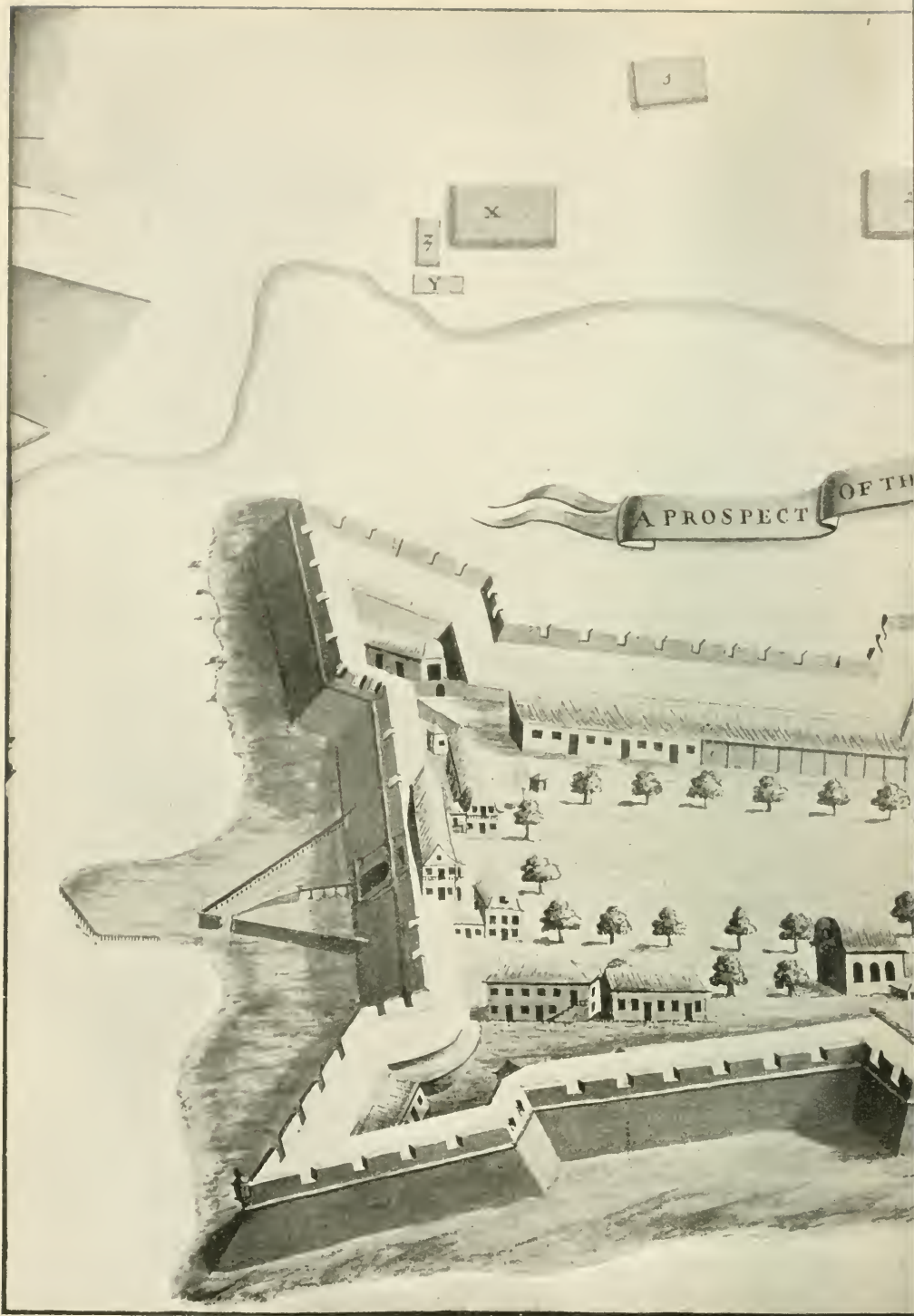
In this general plan of operations we see a definite system proposed, corresponding on broad lines to that which had developed in the Leeward Islands. The ships of force are worked in one strong body with a definite objective—the enemy's squadron or his bases—in view. The smaller ships are stationed in the channels or tracks of the trade and off the ports of the enemy's privateers. To some extent this plan had been developing under the previous commanders; but the cruising squadron of ships of the line had not been kept up to the strength required by any organised system of reliefs, principally because the heavy ships had been used cruising separately in isolated stations, or in company with the lighter vessels, so that strength was dissipated. In consequence, the French convoy system had been successful in giving a very considerable degree of security to French trade, always provided that the San Domingo fleets could evade the Western Squadron in the Bay.

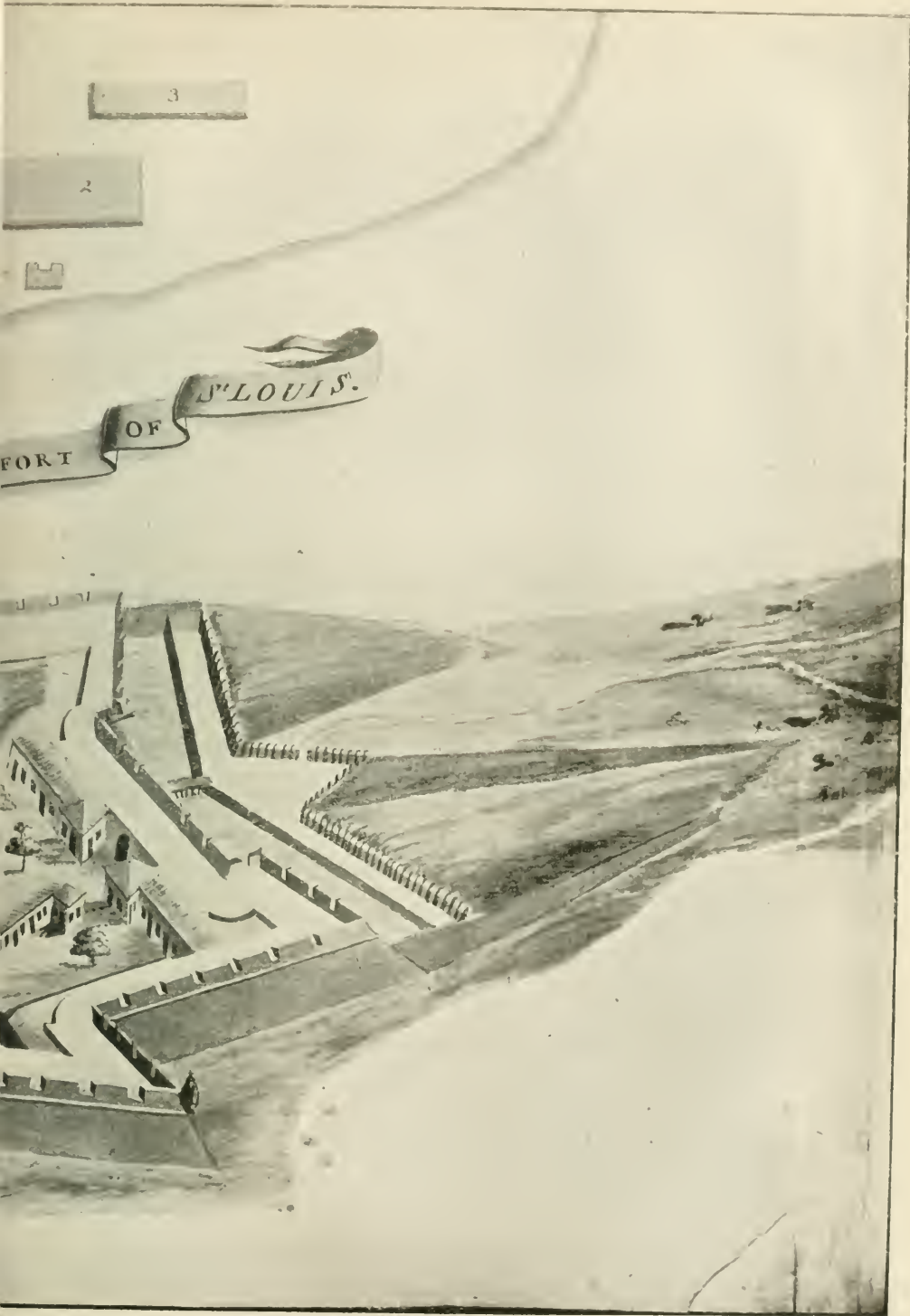
The protection of so many channels and so wide an area demanded a large number of ships. In order to strengthen the Jamaica squadron, Knowles proposed that a regular rule should be established by which the ships in North American waters should reinforce the squadron during the winter months. Lest he should be suspected of making this proposal with a view to his own self-interest, he suggested that the flag share of any prize money these ships might take should go to the Commander-in-Chief of the North American station. This was characteristic of Knowles. At no time in his service did he shew the smallest signs of cupidity or of a desire to profit from prizes at the expense of the interests of the state. Indeed, his generosity and contempt for money were shewn in many ways. Before the action of Havana he gave up his prospective share in any prize money—it amounted to over £3000—to the foremast hands; at Port Louis and Santiago he did the same; and when he died, after a career in which he might have amassed considerable wealth, his fortune did not amount to over £6000 altogether.

Knowles spent but a bare fortnight in harbour after his arrival at Jamaica and then in pursuance of the plan of attack, sailed for Santiago with a squadron of eight ships<sup>1</sup>; but encountering strong northerly winds which prevented him from getting near the coast, he bore up instead, after consultation with Trelawny, for Port Louis "in order that no time might be lost to endamage the enemy" in fruitless

<sup>1</sup> 'Cornwall,' 'Elizabeth,' 'Lenox,' 'Canterbury,' 'Plymouth,' 'Strafford,' 'Worcester,' 'Warwick.' He sailed February 12th.











beating to windward. Port Louis being the only good harbour the French possessed on that side of Hispaniola, its loss would be a severe blow to France. He did not consult his captains, but having made the decision called them on board and informed them of his resolution.

Knowles drew up his instructions after the manner of Vernon. He ordered the squadron to be formed in line of battle and cleared for action as soon as Port Louis should be sighted. He gave a plan of the harbour to each of his captains, shewing where they were to lay their ships; but he informed them that if any ship could not get into position her next astern was to move up without orders and take her place; spare topmasts, yards and fishes were to be landed beforehand, in order to have them available afterwards. His instructions ended: "It being impossible to foresee many accidents that may happen in an attack, and consequently to give definitive orders thereon, such as may arise which you have not instructions about must therefore be left to your own judgment and discretion, and which I ardently recommend to your attention and care." The most stringent orders were given that no guns were to be fired until the ships were placed against the walls of the fort. Knowles was not going to run the risk of repeating the unfortunate business of La Guayra.

The fort of St Louis was built on a small island in the entrance to the harbour. It was a square structure mounting 78 guns, the largest of them 42, 36 and 27 pounders, and four mortars. The walls, which were very substantial, were about 24 feet high. Each side of the fort was about 460 feet long, and the garrison consisted of 310 well-officered regular troops and a great number of negroes trained as artillerymen. Altogether it was a formidable fortification and might well have deterred even so resolute a man as Knowles from attack.

On the 27th he ran into Tiburon Bay in order to water his squadron. A French garrison was in occupation of the landing, but Knowles sent in a boat to inform the commanding officer that so long as his crews were not molested he would not interfere with the troops or the surrounding country. He took the opportunity, while the seamen were filling the casks, of landing his marines and soldiers for four hours exercise. Having watered, he weighed and sailed for the Ile de Vache, and sending a sloop on to watch Port Louis he made all his preparations for attack. All the booms, spare spars and timbers were landed at Orange Key, and each ship got up her sheet anchor from below<sup>1</sup> and hung it over the quarter ready for bringing the ships up when they anchored.

<sup>1</sup> The sheet anchors appear to have been stowed in the hold, *vide* Journal of Admiral Knowles.

When the wind came up at about noon on March 11th, the squadron ran in from the Ile de Vache in line of battle under reduced canvas with a large wind at S.S.E. The 'Elizabeth' led and each ship was kept close up to her next ahead. At 5 minutes past noon the fort opened fire; but not a shot in answer was returned by any of the squadron until all the ships were anchored within a pistol shot of the walls. Then a furious cannonade was begun, both cannon and small arms being well plied from the closely berthed ships. The enemy made a counter attack with a fireship which was so far successful that it forced the 'Elizabeth' to cut her cable and to send her boats to tow the vessel away; but by 3 o'clock the garrison had been driven from their guns and their fire was completely silenced. An officer from the fortress came on board with an offer to surrender, but the proposals he brought were not sufficiently absolute, and Knowles sent in a reply requiring the garrison to surrender as prisoners of war and to engage not to serve against the King of Great Britain for a year and a day. He gave the Governor an hour to consider the terms. Half that time proved sufficient. M. de Châteaunoye capitulated and gave up the fortress, over 160 of the garrison having been lost. The loss of the squadron was 19 killed and 60 wounded, among the former being Captains Cust and Rentoul<sup>1</sup>. The fortress was dismantled and blown up, and, as Vernon had left Porto Bello, the harbour of Port Louis was left by Knowles an "open and defenceless bay." Knowles would have liked, he said, to have followed up his success by attacks on Petit Guave and Cape François, the other French ports in Hispaniola, and thus leave the enemy no harbours where they could lade their fleets in safety and conduct their commerce. "We both," he wrote—meaning Trelawny and himself—"heartily wish we had more force to follow up the blow we have struck against the French, and a regiment be spared from England and one in the winter from Cape Breton, as I proposed to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle some time ago<sup>2</sup>." Without troops, however, these places could not be taken. It was therefore decided to proceed with the attack upon Santiago.

This was an enterprise upon which Knowles set such great store that he did not mind, he told his captains, if he lost two ships in achieving it. He had obtained a chart of the harbour, and after

<sup>1</sup> In letters, Knowles; Journal of Admiral Knowles; Ships Logs; and Colonel Burrard's description, B.M. Add. MS. 34207 are the principal authorities used in the above narrative.

<sup>2</sup> In letters, March 13th, 1748. Knowles returned to the subject again on April 6th: in this letter he included Vera Cruz in his proposals, as being a port the reduction of which would greatly distress the Spaniards for want of a place from whence to draw their treasure.

making out his plans for the attack he held frequent consultations with his captains on the way to Santiago to ensure that they fully understood his intentions, and he further directed them to explain the whole plan to their officers so that if the commanders were killed the lieutenants could carry the scheme into execution<sup>1</sup>. In these consultations the probability of meeting with obstructions in the mouth of the harbour, and the nature of such obstructions, were taken into consideration. Fireships were fully expected to be sent against the incoming squadron, and other forms of defence were also anticipated; but whether a boom was actually referred to would appear to be uncertain. Some officers afterwards asserted that the probability of finding their entrance barred in this way was definitely discussed<sup>2</sup>, others said they did not remember hearing a boom mentioned at the previous conferences; but whether or not this particular form of obstruction was referred to in so many words, it is certain that no one who took part in these frequent consultations expected to sail freely into the harbour. The instructions issued by Knowles for the attack ran as follows<sup>3</sup>:

"You are hereby required and directed so soon as we come in sight of the Island of Cuba to put his Majesty's ship under your command in a proper condition for the attack, and as the entrance of the harbour is very narrow and often times ships in going in from the height of the land on the east side are becalmed or have little flattering breezes, you are to have your long boat upon your off quarter with a stream anchor and two hawsers in, and all your other boats manned ready to tow her out to drop it for warping in should the breeze happen to fail you, and to have your other stream anchor hanging at your gun room port and the cable coiled in the gun room ready to let go to cast her or steady her against the battery should there be occasion; and in case of your wanting any boats to help, you are to hoist a Dutch Ensign at your mizen peak and fire a gun on your offside, when every ship is hereby strictly enjoined to send them to your assistance.

"And as the harbour is so very narrow that the smoke of your guns might not only hinder your own seeing how to get in but also the next ship to you, you are to give strict command that not one gun is fired till your ship is properly anchored and placed against the Battery; and in order to encourage the officers and men to behave gallantly you are to let them know that whatever booty shall be taken I will give my share amongst them, and any officers or seamen that particularly distinguishes themselves by any singular piece of bravery or service during action shall immediately be preferred upon vacancies happening before any other persons whatsoever.

"And you are to have one hundred stout seamen formed into two companies with a commission officer to each to act as captain, and two midshipmen as lieutenants and ensigns, with your master-at-arms and corporals as sergeants

<sup>1</sup> Cf. evidence of Captain Brodie, who said he "made myself master of the plan of attack and was ordered to make my officers so too in case any accident should happen to myself: and I often explained it to them." Court martial on Captain Dent.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Brodie, asked by Admiral Forbes if a boom was ever mentioned said "Yes, a Boom or a ship or fireships were expected to be between Estrella and Mora." Evidence of Captain Brodie at trial of Captain Dent.

<sup>3</sup> Court martial on Captain Dent. In letters, 5293.

and to discipline them in the best manner possible in order to be landed to assist the troops if necessary.

“And as it is proper both the marines and soldiers should be commanded by one officer and there being no field officer belonging to Governour Trelawny’s regiment upon the spot, the Governour and I have requested Major Scott of General Fuller’s regiment to take upon him the command of the whole, which you are to acquaint your marine officers with and direct them to obey him and also the officers who may command the seamen should they be landed together. For which this shall be your warrant.”

Leaving Powlett in the ‘Biddeford,’ with the ‘Oxford’ in company, to cruise off Cape François with the object of intercepting any out-coming French vessels, and some smaller craft to scour the coast of Hispaniola, Knowles weighed on the 19th March and went back to Tiburon Bay to water. It had been his intention that Captain Polycarpus Taylor, who had led in the ‘Elizabeth’ at Port Louis, should again lead at Santiago, but Captain Dent of the ‘Plymouth’ having requested that he might do so, Knowles, in consideration of his being the senior captain, acceded to his request; and when the squadron sailed from Tiburon on the 25th the Admiral detached the ‘Plymouth’ to reconnoitre the harbour’s mouth in order to enable Dent the better to perform the service.

The squadron<sup>1</sup> arrived in sight of the Cuban coast on the afternoon of the 28th, when Dent rejoined with the information that the entrance to the harbour was not difficult. “I thought it a mere bugbear,” he said to Knowles. The wind was then off shore and as it was not possible to attack without a sea breeze the squadron lay off for the night and made ready for action.

The forenoon of the 29th passed without any breeze, and the squadron lay in sight of the harbour’s mouth, with the barges and long boats of all the ships towing alongside the ‘Plymouth’ and ‘Cornwall’ ready to render what service should be required. As they lay waiting for the wind it was seen that the Spaniards had brought down a ship of about 200 tons and placed her in the harbour’s mouth, with a 10” hawser as a bow and stern fast to the eastern and western shores. Dent thereupon came on board the flagship, bringing with him a Spanish pilot engaged to help to carry the ship in, who had now begun to make difficulties in consequence of seeing this obstruction in the entrance of the harbour. “Sir,” said Knowles, “you have Captain Blyke aboard you, who has been a prisoner there, and another gentleman<sup>2</sup>, and these gentlemen know the place very well without depending

<sup>1</sup> The line of battle was as follows: ‘Plymouth,’ 60; ‘Cornwall,’ 80; ‘Canterbury’ (flag), 60; ‘Elizabeth,’ 70; ‘Strafford,’ 60; ‘Warwick,’ 60; ‘Worcester,’ 60; ‘Lenox,’ 56. Frigates: ‘Vainqueur’ in the van, ‘Vulture’ abreast flagship and ‘Sharp’ tender abreast the rear.

<sup>2</sup> A Mr, or Captain Willis of Jamaica who had been in and out of Santiago several times in a South Sea Company’s ship.



A



Scale bar with markings and text, including the word "Millesimo".

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
## A PLAN

of the Entrance and Fortifications of the Harbour of  
St. Iago on the South-side  
of Cuba

by

EDWARD LEWIS. 1743

### EXPLANATION

- A Entrance of St. Iago Lake.
  - B A Shoal on which stands a Perch.
  - C Battery of St. Cathalina.
  - D The *Astrella*.
  - EE Cassines for small Arms.
  - F Line of 16 Guns, New work.
  - G Battery of Retreat.
  - HH Old Out Works.
  - I Gate to la Playa.
  - K La Playa.
  - L Gate to El Moro, 9 Guns.
  - M Way to the new Battery.
  - N New Battery, 11 Guns.
  - O Cittadell or Castle Moro.
  - P Way to the Lower Battery.
  - Q Caverns or Magazines.
  - R Cassines for small Arms.
  - S Battery of 5 Guns.
  - T Perpendicular Rock & Hole in it.
-  Out Guards.

From the Letter A the Harbour of St. Iago forms itself into a Spacious Bay or Lake, being about 5 Miles in Length & about one & a half Broad, & the Course up N.E.; at the Head of which Bay, and partly on the East-side, stands the Town of St. Iago, being open on all sides. As to the Plan of the Town it is Regular, but the Streets uneven & troublesome both for Foot & Carriage; it hath a Castle of a Quadrangular form, but it is of no Strength, its present Use being only a State Prison, & Barracks for the Soldiery.

It hath likewise one Cathedral, one Church, two Chappells, and one Convent of Gray Fryars.

[In this drawing the three ships and the boom with a ship in the middle of the entrance have been entered subsequently. They may represent the positions the ships were intended to take up after passing the entrance; the boom is evidently the one referred to in the narrative.]







upon the Spanish pilot. However, if your pilot raises any objections shoot him or throw him overboard<sup>1</sup>." Dent returned to his ship with this wholesome advice, and with Knowles's reiterated opinion ringing in his ears that he did not care two pence if he lost both the 'Cornwall' and the 'Plymouth' provided the place were taken.

Knowles in the meantime had been able to see something of the entrance and its defences for himself, and had decided that the leading ships could be materially helped if the Apostle's battery were shelled from the flank. He had taken a 10" mortar at Port Louis and had mounted it upon the 'Canterbury's' quarter deck, and he now decided to anchor the 'Canterbury' off the end of the battery and shell it, himself shifting his flag on board the 'Worcester' to pass in to the harbour. Orders were given to clear away the anchors, the flag was actually hauled down in the 'Canterbury' and hoisted on board the 'Worcester,' when the sea breeze came in and the flags on the castles were seen to be blowing out freely. The Admiral, in order not to lose a moment's time, cancelled his instructions for bombarding, and gave the order to attack.

The ships therefore stood in at once with a fair breeze at S.E., giving them about four knots. Knowles, in the 'Canterbury,' so soon as he came within range, opened fire with his 10" mortar on the Mora. His first shot fell short, his next two dropped into the castle. The 'Plymouth' meanwhile was still leading in, and Knowles's third shot had just been fired when Captain Blyke, the South Sea Company's officer who had been put on board to assist with his local knowledge, came up to Dent and said there was a chain across the harbour. Dent hastily asked what he should do, to which Blyke replied that "we had better haul out again<sup>2</sup>"; and the Spanish pilot overhearing the conversation at once declared that to enter would be impossible, and, as Dent said at the court martial, if he persisted "I must take it upon myself and at my own risk, as he would no longer take upon him the charge of the ship<sup>3</sup>." Blyke then said that Dent must make his mind up at once as in another cable's length there would not be room to clear and get out.

Dent had to think and act quickly. The 'Plymouth' had too little way to break through a chain; the silence of the batteries may have seemed suspicious<sup>4</sup>, and if his ship were brought up by the boom or

<sup>1</sup> This is Knowles's account of part of the conversation. The method of disposing of the pilot's objections is confirmed by several officers who overheard it—Brodie, Captain Craig and Captain Hammond.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence of W. Michell, Master of Plymouth: Blyke's and Dent's evidence are to the same effect.

<sup>3</sup> Evidence of Captain Dent.

<sup>4</sup> Dent said afterwards that he thought the enemy's not opening fire meant they had a trap laid for him.

chain he considered her destruction certain. His first thought was to send the long boats and barges away to clear the obstacle and he gave an order for them to shove off. But they had hardly got clear of the ship than he altered his mind, he put his helm hard a-starboard, recalled the boats and stood out to sea, followed by the 'Cornwall.' The battery fired a few shot, one of which took the 'Plymouth's' mizen topmast out of her.

Knowles, who was standing with Trelawny and Brodie on the poop of the 'Canterbury,' could not understand what this sudden retreat meant. He cried out that he would at once lead in himself in the flagship. Brodie remonstrated. "For God's sake, Sir, don't think of doing that. Hoist your flag on board some other ship and I will lead in in the 'Canterbury.' Never let it be said that a commanding officer was so hard pressed for want of captains to go wherever he should think proper to order them." By this time the 'Plymouth,' which had wore short round, had come close, and Knowles signalled for Dent to come on board, and at the same time for Taylor of the 'Elizabeth' to do so also, intending to order the latter to lead in. Taylor was first on board. Knowles said to him, "Do you go immediately and cut that cable"; but as Dent was seen coming at that moment Taylor waited to hear what he had to say. Knowles asked him why he came back, to which Dent replied that there was a chain across the harbour. "Then pray, Sir, why did you not cut it? If there is one I will give you leave to hang me with it. Did you see it, Sir?" Dent answered "No, upon my honour I did not." "Who did?" asked Knowles. Dent replied that "many people called out they saw it" "Pray who? Pitch upon your man," said the Admiral furiously; and at length Dent replied that the pilot had seen it, and many more.

Taylor now hastened back to his ship and made sail for the mouth of the harbour. But the faithless breeze was lessening, and before the 'Elizabeth' and the other ships could form up again and get into position to renew the attack it died down altogether. Soon afterwards the breeze came off the land, which rendered a renewal of the attack on that day impossible.

A council was held that evening to discuss how the obstacle could be removed. Various proposals were made but none were agreed to, and though the wind served to carry the squadron in next day and Knowles himself asserted that he did not believe in the boom or chain, he did not make another attempt, but returned to Jamaica. He gave his reasons in full in writing, voluntarily and without being asked for them, and he clearly considered that they justified his action. These reasons were, firstly, that he had orders to send the 'Plymouth' and

'Drake' to England, and he had promised the merchants at Jamaica that they should sail with their treasure on March 12th; secondly, that several ships had their masts and yards wounded at Port Louis; and thirdly that some ships had but few days provisions on board and some but one day's rum.

"These considerations," he wrote, "weighed with me to give over further thoughts at this juncture about attacking Santiago together with the accidents that might have happened should the current have set to leeward and the ships not been able to fetch Jamaica. But the following considerations were still stronger. I had brought with me three sail of the North America stationed ships whom I was directed to clean and send back again to their stations early in the spring. These ships I was obliged to employ a-cruising, some off Cape François and others upon different stations during the time I took the great ships upon this expedition with me. The season being now advanced I judged it highly necessary to clean them and send them back to their respective stations: as the trade of those colonies was left exposed and as the cleaning them would naturally take up some time, I was under the necessity of sending other ships upon those stations in their rooms till the proper ships were cleaned which I could not have done had I delayed any longer time upon this affair as I had as far as Cape François to send for some of the American stationed ships, and the further necessity there was of my presence at Port Royal to conduct and direct the rest of his Majesty's squadron<sup>1</sup>."

All of these reasons were proper ones for not delaying long upon this operation; but one cannot but agree with the view taken by the members of the court which subsequently tried Captain Dent, "that the reasons Mr Knowles has delivered in writing to the court for not renewing the attack on the 30th of March seem to be equally strong for his not attacking it at all on the 29th, unless he imagined the obstacles to be greater than he thought them the day before."

Knowles wrote home describing his attempt. He made no definite charges against Dent, but he inserted a sentence in his despatch which clearly hinted that he considered Dent should have carried his ship in in spite of the obstacles. "I am far from thinking it impracticable," he wrote, "especially if an officer of solid resolution and judgment leads." The terms of this despatch, and also those of a later one in which Knowles sent information of the weakness of the castles—information, it must be pointed out, already in his hands at the time of the attack—which he used to emphasise his opinion that the harbour might have been carried, became known to Dent who applied for a court martial. The court, presided over by Hawke, sat in February, 1750. The evidence gives curious reading. Not one witness was produced who had seen either a boom or a chain. The officers in the boats expressed the opinion that it would not have been difficult to cut away the obstructing ship. It was said that Dent could easily have checked the 'Plymouth's' way by dropping a stern anchor while the ship was cut adrift, and that

<sup>1</sup> Paper put in by Admiral Knowles at the trial of Captain Dent.

the breeze would have swung her out of the Channel. It was proved that Dent himself never looked to see whether there actually was a chain or a boom, but acted at once upon the hurried advice of the South Sea officer and the Spanish pilot. Evidence was brought forward which confirmed Knowles's statement that he had told his captains that he did not mind if he lost two ships, and the fact of all the boats of the squadron being sent to the leading ships with grappling irons, broad axes and means for removing obstructions shewed that Knowles expected some form of opposition. In spite of this, the court found that no boom or chain had been anticipated, but that Knowles had clearly thought to find the port open; that if the 'Plymouth' had tried to force the boom, considering the narrowness of the entrance, the slackening of the wind inshore, and the swell round Mora point towards the western shore, the attempt would have resulted in the loss of the 'Plymouth'; and that it was very doubtful if the remainder of the squadron could have got in. They returned an unanimous negative to the question: "Is it therefore the opinion of the court when so hazardous an obstruction offered, and which was unknown to the Rear Admiral or to the officers at the several consultations, and the attack ordered upon a presumption of its being an open port, that Mr Knowles's orders implied that Captain Dent should run the risk of losing his ship by attempting to force it?" The decision hung, it would appear, upon the question as to how far every situation must be foreseen in orders. Knowles had expected obstacles; fireships had actually been named, but as a boom had not been mentioned some officers were of the opinion that Dent was justified in hauling off when he found this obstruction. Captain Innes said, "As the Rear Admiral had mentioned the harbour's mouth being open, unless a disposition had been made relative to a boom and Captain Dent had no other orders than the general orders, I think he ought to have applied that there might be a fresh disposition made."

There is, however, one other circumstance which appears strongly to have influenced the court and that was Knowles's own decision, after the consultation in the evening, not to renew the attack. If, said the court, Knowles really believed that there was no insurmountable obstacle, he could have attacked again next day, and his reasons for not doing so were not convincing. They considered that by declining to repeat his attempt he shewed that his opinion as to the difficulties coincided with Dent's, and that therefore he had no right to criticise the behaviour of his senior Captain; and it is not impossible that the fact that Knowles had made no definite charges against Dent, but had confined his accusations to insinuations in a letter, may also have

weighed with the court in forming their judgment; Dent was acquitted.

The fact remained that Santiago had been left in its security; and a new disposition of the British squadron was made. Leaving the 'Worcester' to cruise between Cape Tiburon and Port Louis, and sending the 'Strafford' and 'Canterbury' to join Powlett off Cape François, Knowles shifted his flag on board the 'Cornwall' and sailed for Jamaica with the remainder of the squadron to victual and refit.

On the 14th April a report reached Knowles at Port Royal that four sail of French men-of-war<sup>1</sup> were going to escort home the French trade, which to the number of 100 sail now lay held up in Cape François. Determining to have an ample margin of strength to make sure of success, he hastened the refit of the 'Warwick' in order to sail in her himself and join the squadron. He also contemplated, in accordance with his well-known views, attacking Cape François itself. He sent off the 'Lenox' and 'Elizabeth' at once—they sailed on the 17th—but before they reached Cape François a new situation had arisen. Powlett, on April 22nd, captured a snow which he learned had sailed from Cadiz in company with three Spanish men-of-war and 12 large merchant ships bound to Vera Cruz. He hastened to Jamaica to inform the Admiral, and arriving there on the 30th, was at once detached with the same squadron, reinforced with the 'Enterprise,' to cruise between Cape Antonio and Cape Catoche in the hope of intercepting the Spaniards. There were, however, still the French at Cape François to be considered; the 'Lenox' and 'Elizabeth' not having met Powlett on their way were now alone in that part; and Knowles therefore sent two more ships<sup>2</sup> to reinforce them and put all hands he could get hold of to work on the 'Cornwall,' in which ship he intended to join the force. The 'Tilbury,' arriving from England with a convoy on May 14th, was at once sent on to Cape François. The situation was now a promising one. Knowles had all his heavy ships massed in two squadrons on the track of two important fleets of the enemy and superior to each of them<sup>3</sup>. Fortune, however, was against him. Not only did the expected Frenchmen make no appearance, but in their stead the 'Sheerness' sailed into the squadron on the 29th June bringing orders for a cessation of arms with France. Spain was now the only enemy.

<sup>1</sup> One of 80, two 64's and a 44 gun ship.

<sup>2</sup> 'Warwick' and 'Fowey.'

<sup>3</sup> The 'Plymouth' had been sent home to England, a weakening of the squadron which Knowles regretted, as he would have wished to attack San Juan da Ullua or Vera Cruz. "A pity," he says, "as the enemy had been lulled into a state of security and there is a fine opportunity to attack them at every place." Knowles to Anson, April 6th, 1748. B.M. Add. MS. 15956, f. 136.

Under these changed circumstances a redistribution of the squadron was necessary. Knowles recalled the ships from Cape François and prepared to make up a strong squadron to cruise upon the Spanish trade between Vera Cruz and Havana.

Powlett had no more luck in his station off Cape Antonio. From April 30th until the middle of July he cruised continually, but he never saw the ships from Cadiz, and on the 23rd he arrived at Port Royal after three months at sea, with only a few small prizes to his credit.

The time of year was however favourable for a second attempt on the Spanish trade. It will be recollected that the middle of August or beginning of September was the season at which the Spaniards were in the habit of bringing up the treasure from Vera Cruz to Havana, and meeting it off the Tortuga Bank with the Havana squadron. "Having received certain intelligence," wrote Knowles in his Journal, "of the time of the Spanish ships sailing from Vera Cruz with the treasure for Havana, I consulted with Governor Trelawny about intercepting them, who concurring in sentiment with me I resolved upon going down off the Tortuga Bank and to endeavour to do it accordingly." Knowles appears constantly to have consulted with the Governor of Jamaica about all his proceedings; he made a point of doing so in order to preserve harmony between the sea and land forces<sup>1</sup>, and no shadow of a disagreement between the navy and the army seems to have marred the record of his command.

Sending a frigate to recall the 'Warwick,' which had sailed with a convoy and with instructions to operate in the windward passage for privateers, Knowles sailed from Jamaica with five ships<sup>2</sup>, which he spread in a broad line abreast, one mile apart, and shaped course for Cape Antonio and thence to the Tortuga Bank. Here he cruised steadily with his squadron, sometimes coming to anchor off the dry Tortugas and taking an opportunity to hog his ships, sometimes dropping as far down as Cape Catoche. He was joined by the 'Warwick,' but for nearly six weeks he hardly sighted a sail of importance. Some small captures were made, but that was all.

At length he was rewarded with information about the enemy. On September 30th the 'Lenox,' Captain Holmes, joined him with news that she had been chased the day before by an enemy squadron of eight sail. Holmes, who had sailed from Jamaica with a convoy bound for England, had taken the route of the Florida channel owing to the

<sup>1</sup> He referred in one of his first letters from Jamaica to his intention to work "in the most complete harmony" with the Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

<sup>2</sup> 'Cornwall' (flag), 'Canterbury,' 'Tilbury,' 'Strafford,' 'Oxford'; and a sloop tender. The 'Lenox' was left behind to take a homeward bound convoy.

security which would be afforded by the presence of the Admiral's squadron. Notwithstanding this precaution—so incomplete must be any patrol of a strait—he had run into the jaws of a Spanish squadron under Admiral Reggio and had narrowly escaped capture. He had on board the 'Lenox' a considerable sum of money of his own, the fruit of his services while on the station, and also a large number of passengers, and between the personal call of his fortune and the importunities of his passengers who urged him to hasten on to England, he had strong inducements to do so. But to his credit he resisted both appeals and proceeded to find his Admiral, who he knew was cruising thereabouts, in order to give him the information of the presence of the enemy and to assist in defeating them<sup>1</sup>. Holmes came on board the 'Cornwall' and gave the Admiral his news. Knowles called the other captains on board and gave them their instructions for battle. The squadron at once stood over towards the Cuban coast, in which direction Holmes reported the enemy to be, to seek and engage them.

Next morning—October 1st—the wind then being at E.N.E., Knowles's squadron was standing to the south-eastward in loose order. The 'Oxford' was about two miles ahead of the main body, some other ships were a long way astern and the ships most to leeward were about a mile from the 'Cornwall.' At 5 A.M., when the ships were in this straggling order, the Spanish squadron was seen standing to the northward. It also was scattered, a larger body of five ships being about three leagues distant bearing from S.E. to S.E. by S., and a smaller body of two ships bearing S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. and apparently three to four miles astern and to leeward of their consorts<sup>2</sup>.

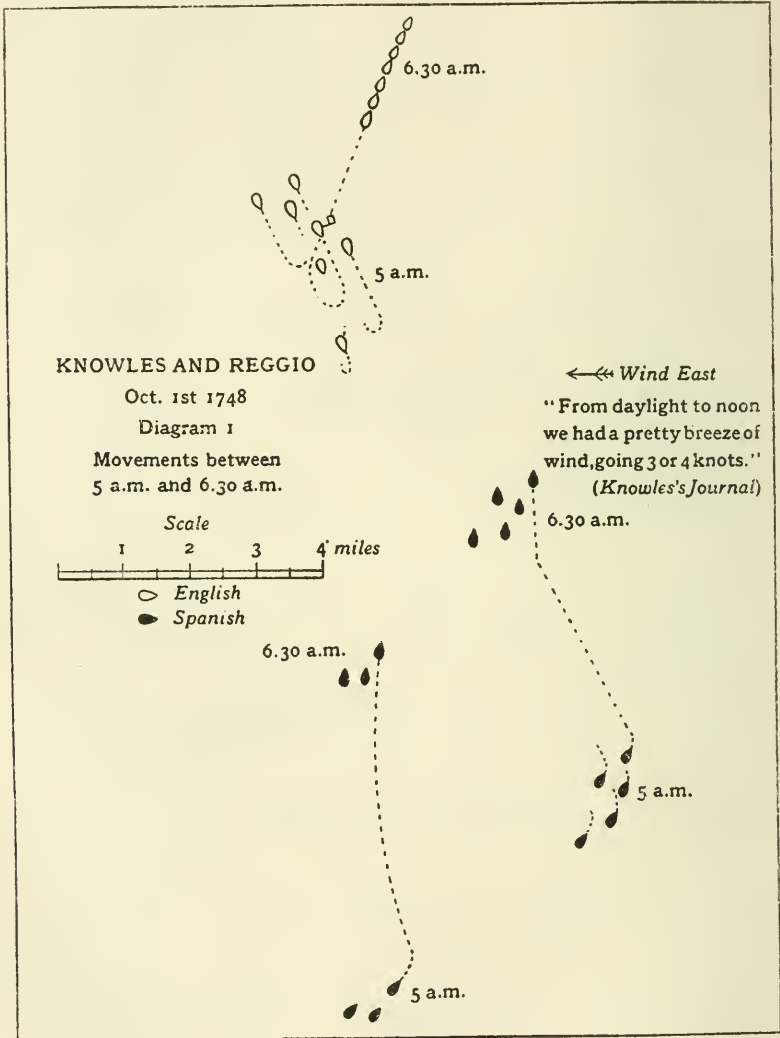
When Admiral Reggio sighted the strange vessels to the N.W. he first took them to be the convoy he had previously chased. He therefore made sail, bore up and chased with his five leading ships, steering direct for the British squadron. Knowles, whose leeward-most ships were as much as a mile to leeward of the flagship and the others a good way astern, brought to to collect his squadron. When he saw that the Spaniards were coming up fast and had the weather gage he made sail again a few minutes later and wore, and stood to the northward forming line as he went, at the same time clearing decks for action and hoisting his colours. The sight of the colours and the movement of the ships forming line showed Reggio that he had a force of men-of-war

<sup>1</sup> Holmes was subsequently tried on charges preferred by Knowles, but was honourably acquitted, the court emphasising their verdict with a strong expression of opinion as to his self-abnegation in returning when he had so much of his personal fortune at stake. Admiral Hawke was president of the court which tried him.

<sup>2</sup> See Diagram 1, p. 134.

to deal with. Instead of continuing in chase he bore up and ran down to leeward to join the straggling ships to the westward.

By a combination of these manœuvres on the part of the opposing Admirals, Knowles, soon after 6.30 when he had made about a league to

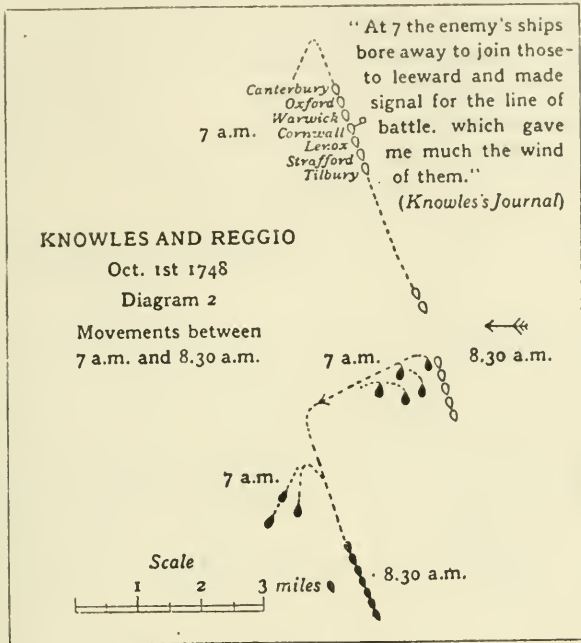


the northward, had reached a position from which he could weather the enemy. He at once signalled to tack, ordering the same ships that were leading on the starboard tack to lead on the larboard tack, thus reversing the order of battle with larboard tacks on board. His ships were



now formed in a good line, and he began to stand to the southward with his squadron well closed up. Reggio at about that time joined his laggard ships to leeward, and the Spanish squadron then stood to the S.E. by S., about a point free<sup>1</sup>.

Knowles's object now was to overhaul the enemy and engage them as soon as possible, and with this in view he set all sail he could. Nor



<sup>1</sup> Final lines of battle of the British and Spanish squadrons:

BRITISH (436 guns).	SPANISH (440 guns).
'Tilbury' ... 60 Capt. Powlett	'Invencible' (flag) 74 R. Adm. Spinola
'Stafford' ... 60 Capt. Brodie	'Conquistador' 64
'Cornwall' (flag) 80 Capt. Taylor	'Africa' (flag) ... 74 V. Adm. Reggio
R. Adm. Knowles	'Galga' ... 36
'Oxford' ... 60 Capt. Toll	(Out of the line)
(Out of the line to act as a Corps de reserve)	'Dragon' ... 64
'Lenox' ... 56* Capt. Holmes	'Nueva España' 64
'Warwick' ... 60 Capt. Innes	'Real Familia' 64
'Canterbury' ... 60 Capt. Clark	

\* Only 56 guns were mounted, though she was properly a 60 gun ship.

"Though there was an equal number of ships, yet the enemy had the advantage both in guns and men as well as the superior size of their ships and greater weight of metal, the smallest ships of their line being of equal dimensions with our capital ship, the 'Cornwall,' and their two Admirals' ships being as large as our first-rates." Journal of Captain Innes.

did the Spaniards show any disinclination to meet his wishes; they bunted their mainsails and keeping only so much canvas aboard as was necessary to maintain the ships in good order, jogged along to await the attack.

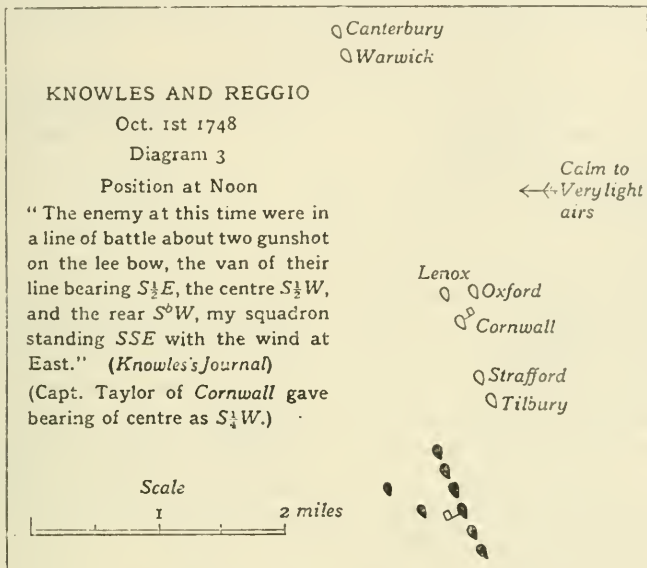
The British squadron quickly began to open out, the ships at the rear dropping astern; and signals were put abroad for closing the line. The 'Warwick,' next astern of the flagship, was soon out of station and was ordered by the Admiral to cut away her long boat, but nevertheless she continued to fall to the rear<sup>1</sup>. The gap was increased by a misinterpreted signal. Between 9 and 10 A.M. Knowles, finding himself well to windward of the enemy, wished to close them and hoisted a Genoese flag which was the signal "for those ships that are to lead in a line of battle by the wind with the larboard tacks on board to lead in the line of battle one astern of another with a large wind." Knowles's intention was obvious—he desired to close the enemy; but three ships—the 'Warwick,' 'Oxford' and 'Canterbury'—interpreted the signal as referring not to those ships which were actually leading, but to those which in the established line of battle were to lead with the larboard tacks on board. Knowles's signal to tack in succession had reversed the line; the ship appointed to lead on the larboard tack was the 'Canterbury,' and this ship at once put her helm up and set her topmast studdingsails, the 'Oxford' prepared to form astern of her, and the 'Warwick' hauled up her mainsail, backed her mizen topsail and rigged out her studding sail booms to fall astern of the 'Oxford' and be ready to make sail so soon as she had got into place.

When Knowles saw this misinterpretation of his intention he at once signalled the 'Warwick' to make sail and hauled the signal down. But great harm had been done. The gap between the 'Warwick' and 'Cornwall' had been considerably increased while the former ship was brought to, and without reducing sail in the whole squadron this gap could not be filled. The rear ships hauled down their studding sails and luffed back into the line astern of the 'Warwick.' This ship continued to drop, and Knowles, who since the 'Canterbury's' upper deck guns were 12-pounders as against the 'Warwick's' 9-pounders, wished to keep her as his rear ship to oppose the 'Real Familia,' did not order her to close up and pass ahead of the 'Warwick.'

Two causes were thus at work to separate the British squadron. First, the slow sailing of the 'Warwick'; next the mistake in the signal which caused that ship to bring to. The gap obliged Knowles to shorten sail to allow the rear ships to come up, and by his so

<sup>1</sup> The line at this time was in the following order from van to rear: 'Tilbury,' 'Strafford,' 'Lenox,' 'Cornwall,' 'Warwick,' 'Oxford,' 'Canterbury.'

doing the leading ships went further ahead before they brought to and made an interval between 'Cornwall' and 'Lenox.' Then Knowles, observing that the Spanish Admiral altered the disposition of his line by shifting one ship from ahead of his flagship to astern of her, ordered the 'Lenox' to change places with the 'Cornwall' and thus increased the gap between the flagship and the leading ships. Finally, seeing Reggio drop the frigate 'Galga' out of the line Knowles, in order to equalise numbers, ordered the 'Oxford' out of his line to act as a *corps de reserve*, following the practice initiated by Vernon, by which any such ship was to go without orders to the assistance of any other which was hard pressed.



By noon the 'Warwick' was fully two miles, or even more, astern of the 'Lenox.' 'Cornwall' was about a mile astern of 'Strafford' and 'Oxford' was broad on 'Lenox's' weather quarter. The wind had gone to east during the forenoon, but Knowles still had the weather gage. The enemy meantime continued to go under easy sail. The breeze however was dying down and soon after noon it fell nearly calm for some time, during which the squadron did not make more than a knot and a half, or about three knots in the puffs.

Between 1 and 2 P.M. the wind again freshened from a quarter rather to the northward of east, and the British squadron began to draw up again, so that by about 2.30 P.M. the 'Tilbury,' Captain Powlett, reached a position a little before the enemy's centre and

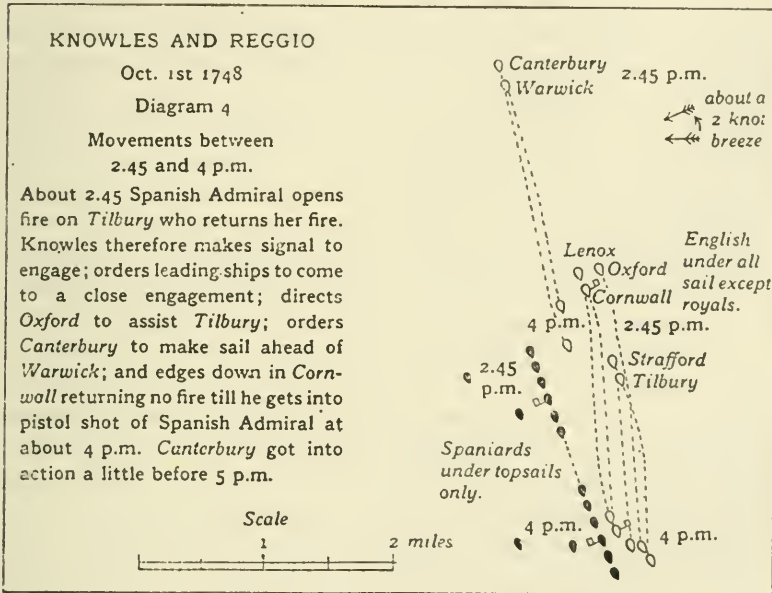
about a mile to windward of it. In this situation Reggio opened fire on the 'Tilbury' and 'Strafford' from his centre ships. Although Powlett had orders from Knowles not to engage at a long range nor to fire until the signal was made, some of his guns replied to the enemy. Seeing this, and feeling that when once fire was opened it was undesirable to stop it, Knowles, although two ships only were in a position to come into action, made the signal for the leading ships to lead large and to engage. This signal was not acted upon by the 'Tilbury'—the court martial found that the signal was not seen on board her<sup>1</sup>—and she continued to edge down very gradually towards the enemy in order to draw up to his leading ship, followed by her next astern, the 'Strafford,' Captain Brodie, who having seen the signal, expected to see 'Tilbury' bear up every minute and waited for her to do so. After an ineffective cannonading at long range had gone on for some time, Knowles, seeing that his order was not being carried out, hoisted the 'Tilbury's' signal to come to a close engagement. This signal was not clearly made out on board the 'Tilbury,' the Dutch flag which formed the signal being mistaken for a blue and white flag; but although it was obvious that this could not have been the signal, since its interpretation was meaningless in the situation, and although he could make out his own pendants and had no doubt that it was addressed to him, Powlett took no steps to find out what the signal really was. He was afterwards in some uneasiness as to his conduct. In his Journal he wrote: "At 55 minutes past [2] our signal was made, but the Admiral being then engaging, [1] could not distinguish what it was." In a letter written to Knowles a day or two later he said that there was "some misunderstanding" about the signal. But whatever may have been the misunderstanding the result was that the 'Tilbury' remained at an ineffective range and threw her shot into the sea. When tried by court martial Powlett was found guilty of negligence. He was reprimanded for neglecting to send his boat on board the Admiral when he saw the ship's signal flying, but he was acquitted of the charge of holding back from the engagement.

His next astern, the 'Strafford,' Captain Brodie, saw the signal for leading large, and, in accordance with custom, waited for the leading ship to bear up. When some time passed and she still held a lasking course, Brodie put his own helm up frankly and standing down to the second ship of the enemy's line, the 'Conquistador,' engaged her with admirable vigour and determination.

In comparing Powlett's conduct with Brodie's it is necessary to remember that it was proved to the satisfaction of the court that he

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of court martial on Captain Powlett.

did not see the signal to lead large, while Brodie did see it. Brodie had, therefore, an order upon which to act, while Powlett had not, and the latter would have been acting in deliberate disobedience of orders if he had borne down on the enemy without permission. It may be said that when he saw Brodie bearing down he should have followed suit, but this would not be a wholly just criticism. The Admiral had not yet come up, most of the ships were far astern, no signal to lead large had been seen. In such circumstances, and in view of the instructions of the time, it was but natural as he omitted to inform himself of the meaning of the signal, that he should keep his wind, and perhaps wonder why the 'Strafford' was bearing away and going prematurely into action, possibly to the detriment of the achievement of the Admiral's



intentions. But as he had seen his pendant flying he had a clear indication that some action on his part was required, and we can only feel that the court took a lenient view of his conduct.

The engagement having now begun, Knowles saw that he must get all his ships into action as soon as he could, and that considerations as to which ship should engage the 'Real Familia' must give way to the major object of employing as much of his force as possible. The Admiral therefore sent a message to the Captain of the 'Canterbury' to make sail and pass the 'Warwick'; the officer carrying the message

was also directed to order the 'Warwick' to make all possible haste to get up to the enemy<sup>1</sup>.

Knowles's signal to the leading ships to lead large and engage was, as before, the Genoese flag at the mizen peak. Although Captain Innes of the 'Warwick' had seen on the previous occasion that Knowles did not intend this signal to be interpreted as an order to invert the line, and that in the situation in which the squadrons now were it could not possibly be intended to bear any such meaning, he chose to understand it according to its most rigid meaning, and for a second time he hauled up his mainsail and backed his main topsail. He records in his Journal that the "same mistake" as before was made by the Admiral in hoisting the Genoese flag, and lays the whole blame for his not coming into action on the signals made by the Admiral. Yet the Admiral's meaning in making this signal must, at this stage of the action, have been clear to any man. There is no suggestion that Innes was lacking in courage. When he did get into action later he engaged his adversary closely. But there is ground for believing that his judgment was warped, possibly by dislike of his Commander-in-Chief, and that like Lestock, he chose to observe every punctilio of the meaning of signals rather than read them in the sense in which they were applicable to the situation.

For a full hour the brunt of the action was sustained by the 'Strafford,' with the 'Tilbury' firing ineffectually outside range. Knowles, who had crowded sail, came up about 4 P.M., having received the fire of the ships astern of the Spanish Admiral's second for some 30 minutes without returning a gun. As he drew up abreast the Admiral's second he returned her fire, and ordering the 'Oxford' ahead to assist the leading ship, as the Spanish Admiral's ship, the 'Invencible,' appeared to be a heavier vessel than the 'Tilbury,' he bore close down to the Spanish Admiral and engaged him at half pistol shot, never touching his main clew-garnets until he was actually in position. The 'Lenox,' which had kept close astern of him, opened a smart fire at the same time, but shooting ahead of the 'Cornwall' was out of action for some time<sup>2</sup>.

At half-past four the 'Conquistador,' with which the 'Strafford' was engaged, had been set on fire for the third time by the British cohorn shells<sup>3</sup>, her yards were all shot down and her sails and rigging cut to pieces. Shortly afterwards she struck, but as neither the 'Strafford' nor the 'Cornwall' had a boat to send to take possession

<sup>1</sup> Captain's Journal of 'Warwick.'

<sup>2</sup> The court martial found that damage aloft kept the 'Lenox' out of action.

<sup>3</sup> The use of cohorns was a special idea of Knowles's.

of her, Reggio fired three shot at her to bring her back, and she rehoisted her colours. The 'Strafford' had by then passed clear of her.

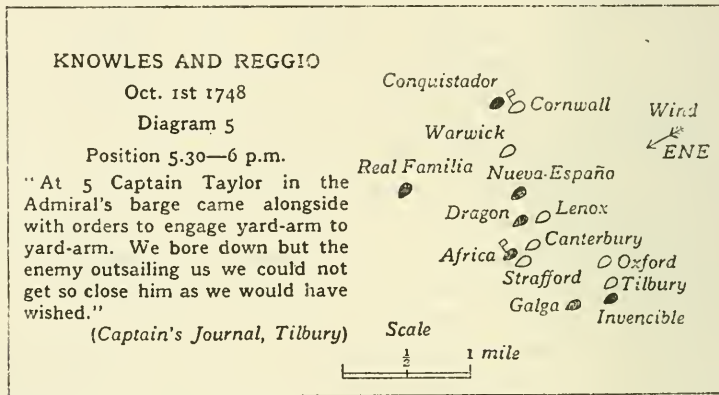
At about the same time as the 'Conquistador' was disabled, Knowles drove the Spanish Admiral out of the line. Reggio set his spritsail and mainsail, loosed his topgallant sails and bore away before the wind. His example was followed by the rest of the Spanish squadron. Knowles bore up to follow them, but as he did so an unlucky shot brought his foretopsail down; another cut away his maintopmast; and though he then set his spritsail and mainsail to pursue he made little way. At the same time he hauled down the signal for the line and made that for general chase to leeward, "which not being taken notice of so soon as it ought, I sent away my captain aboard each ship with orders for them to pursue the enemy and lay close alongside of 'em and not lay firing at so great a distance as they did or I would send other officers on board to command their ships." The 'Strafford' at once bore away and closed the 'Africa.' The 'Lenox' was less prompt, and Captain Taylor, who was sent by Knowles to deliver his message, said that Holmes did not make all the sail he could in pursuit. Taylor insisted further that after receiving the Admiral's message Holmes sprang his luff. This Holmes indignantly denied. The fact remains on the one hand that the 'Lenox' followed the 'Strafford' at some distance, whereas if she had borne up at once she would have been close to the 'Strafford.' On the other hand, the members of the court martial were satisfied that Holmes's conduct was open to no censure.

By about a quarter past five the 'Canterbury' came up and joined the 'Strafford' in attacking the 'Africa,' behaving, in Knowles's words "exceedingly well." The 'Warwick' joined soon after and ran abreast the 'Conquistador,' which had now become the rear ship of the enemy and fired into her. At the same time the 'Cornwall,' which was toiling slowly in pursuit, did the same. "Observing the Admiral's second disabled (who struck once before), I run up alongside of her with intentions to board her, when she struck and called out for quarters<sup>1</sup>." Knowles and Captain Innes each claimed that she struck to his own ship—a claim on the Admiral's part which was strongly resented by the Captain of the 'Warwick,' who made trenchant remarks in his Journal, shewing considerable animus against his Commander-in-Chief, and saying that the Admiral concluded his share of the engagement by laying to and exchanging the prisoners of the 'Warwick's' prize. Knowles's claim to the capture of the 'Conquistador' was sustained by Brodie, who recorded in his Journal, "5.30. The Admiral bore down to the 'Conquistador' (which had previously struck to the 'Strafford') and took her."

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Admiral Knowles.

Knowles, in his charges against Captain Innes, made the following statement regarding the latter's claim: "When Captain Innes came on board the 'Cornwall' and said it was he that made the 'Conquistador' strike, I bid him ask the Spanish Captain of her then present, who it was he struck to, who told him he would have fought him at that distance which he engaged for two years (if he had ammunition) for he was sure they would have killed more fish than men<sup>1</sup>."

The 'Conquistador' having struck, Knowles sent orders to the 'Warwick' to pursue the enemy, who were now flying. The situation of affairs at about this time—between 5.30 and 6 P.M.—was as follows. The 'Tilbury' and 'Oxford' were engaging the 'Invencible' and 'Galga' at a range<sup>2</sup>, which though fairly close was not such as to satisfy Knowles, who had sent his flag captain on board at about 5 ordering her to engage



yard arm to yard arm. When the 'Oxford' came up to second her the Spaniard was seconded by the 'Galga,' but, as in the 'Tilbury's' case, Knowles was not convinced that the 'Oxford' was doing as much as she ought and he signalled her to come to a closer engagement. Captain Toll was subsequently tried for his conduct. The court found that "It does appear that in the situation of the Tilbury, Invencible and Galga, when the Oxford got up into the van, if Captain Toll had placed his ship on the Tilbury's lee quarter instead of astern he would have been in a better situation to annoy the Invencible and Galga." Toll's conduct was attributed at his court martial to an error of judgment, and he was reprimanded only—a verdict and sentence which are extremely lenient, and compare unfavourably with those of the court which tried Captain Fox after Hawke's action.

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of court martial on Captain Innes.

<sup>2</sup> The court martial found that 'Tilbury' engaged at point blank.



Astern of the 'Tilbury' and 'Oxford,' and separated from them by some distance, the 'Canterbury' was engaging the 'Africa,' which she had gone down to attack after the 'Conquistador' had first struck. The 'Africa' had been driven out of the line by Knowles and was supported by the 'Dragon' and 'Nueva España,' which in their turn were being engaged by the 'Canterbury' and 'Lenox.' The 'Real Familia' had hauled away in consequence of the combined fire of the ships of the British rear as they came up, and the 'Warwick' was still lying near the 'Conquistador.' Knowles had ordered her to join the pursuit of the flying enemy, but Innes did not hasten to obey the order, and though he made sail to follow them he might have made more<sup>1</sup>.

A running action now continued into the night. The 'Warwick' followed the 'Strafford' and 'Canterbury,' which stuck to the Spanish flagship, shot away her main and mizen masts and battered her severely. The British ships also suffered considerably aloft, and when the 'Africa' lost her way, the 'Strafford,' unable to bring to through having all her braces and bowlines cut, shot ahead "contrary to our inclinations," as Brodie wrote. About 10 at night the British ships found themselves close upon a lee shore; so, having rove some new gear, they went about and stood to seaward to rejoin the flag. The 'Tilbury' and 'Oxford' had followed the 'Invencible,' a ship whose stout sides enabled her to stand much battering. By 9 at night the Spaniard appeared to be silenced, and the 'Tilbury,' then much damaged aloft, was somewhat astern. The 'Oxford' moved up and gave her another broadside which was not returned, and she was about to repeat it and call upon the 'Invencible' to surrender when a fire broke out in her gun room where some loose powder was lying. Confusion followed. The 'Invencible' observing it rallied, poured in a broadside and a smart fire of small arms, and made off to the westward. From Captain Toll's account of the affair, the 'Tilbury,' from the time he joined her till the escape of the enemy, conducted herself indifferently.

The squadron began to rejoin Knowles in the morning. The 'Strafford' and 'Canterbury' brought him the news that the 'Africa' was distasted close in shore, but in such a situation that without pilots it was difficult to attack her. Knowles, having repaired his damages, went himself early next morning to endeavour to take or burn her. She was found lying at anchor, her masts gone, in a small bay about 25 miles to the eastward of Havana. When the English ships were seen coming in, her crew deserted their ship and set her on fire.

<sup>1</sup> For this Innes was found guilty of negligence, in that he did not set his studding sails to pursue; he fell under part of the 11th Article and was sentenced to be suspended from his rank for three months.

Having seen the Spanish flagship blow up Knowles stood away to Havana to land his prisoners. Here he learned that the remaining four Spanish ships had got into harbour, greatly disabled, the 'Invincible' in particular being reduced to a wreck. As the British ships lay off Havana that afternoon a Spanish sloop came into the squadron and gave Knowles the news that the preliminaries of peace had been signed, and that hostilities were at an end. Knowles sent an officer into the harbour with a flag of truce and received confirmation of the report in a letter from the Governor of Havana.

Thus the final action of the war came to an end with the capture of one ship and the destruction of another—an ending which every one agreed was unsatisfactory and might have been different. Knowles blamed the four captains of the 'Tilbury,' 'Oxford,' 'Lenox' and 'Warwick.' These captains in return blamed him. The remaining captains—Brodie, Clark and Taylor—supported him. In his despatch to the Admiralty, Knowles wrote, "Upon the beginning of the action I saw the enemy's scheme was to cannonade and not come to a close engagement which I was resolved for and therefore bore down within half musket shot of the Admiral, having received several broadsides from the four sternmost ships before I returned one gun; and had some of the ships done the same or daylight continued I am confident we should have been in possession of them all before night, but at the first portion of the action there appeared too much bashfulness (to give it no harder term)<sup>1</sup>."

Knowles's strictures may well be understood. The 'Tilbury' had not borne down nor come to a close engagement when signalled to do so. The 'Lenox' had run up to windward of the 'Cornwall' and had been out of action for half an hour while the flagship was engaging the 'Africa' and her next astern. The 'Oxford' had not forced the fighting with 'Invincible.' The 'Warwick' had lagged astern during the approach, and, when Knowles was getting into action, was lying, so far as he could see, "with her mainsail up, her main topsail aback and her topgallant sails lowered."

Knowles did not bring these officers to a court martial—in fact he could not do so, as he had not sufficient senior officers to form a court. But when the terms of his despatch became known, the four Captains whose action he censured made charges, which appear to have been drafted by Innes, against the Admiral. It is to be observed that the Captains of the 'Strafford' and 'Canterbury,' whose conduct throughout was above suspicion, were no parties to these accusations, which averred that Knowles did "by bad conduct, mistaken signals

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Admiral Knowles.

and unofficer-like conduct, give great advantage to the enemy by engaging in a straggling line a superior squadron, drawn up in a close line of battle, late in the day, when he might have attacked him much earlier and to greater advantage," and adding a charge, which coming from these officers was singularly out of place, to the effect that Knowles kept his flagship out of action and acted in a dishonourable manner. The resemblance of the accusations to those made by Lestock in a not dissimilar situation is somewhat striking, and it may be that the discreditable result of the former trial may have emboldened these officers publicly to impugn the conduct of their Admiral.

Knowles had no difficulty in brushing away the preposterous suggestion made against his personal courage. That his handling of the squadron was completely judicious was not so easily established. He admitted that he attacked in a straggling manner but claimed that this was forced on him as, once the 'Tilbury' had opened fire he could not do otherwise than fight; and, with perfect justice, he pointed out that the squadron was straggling because his orders had been disobeyed. Although he admitted that he might have attacked earlier, if, instead of wearing and forming line to the northward he had stood direct for the enemy at daylight, yet, if he had so acted, he could not have engaged with the weather gage, nor could he, as his accusers stated, have engaged the five leading ships of the enemy before they joined the ships to leeward. The court found no fault with his action in this matter. They gave their opinion that in wearing as he did he "acted as a good officer"; and there is no doubt that by so doing he conformed to established custom, and that he could not have cut off the lee ships and beaten them in detail<sup>1</sup>. But whether he would have cut them off or not, it is equally clear that by going direct for the enemy he would have brought on the action sooner and would have had a better chance of completing it. If it were imperative to have the weather gage and come into action in line of battle his movements were well made. Contemporary thought judged it so to be; and the most that criticism can say in the matter is that Knowles did not rise superior to the accepted conventions of the time—conventions, it must be borne in mind, that had been crystallised by the judgment in the Mathews and Lestock courts martial. The reasons for the doctrine of engaging to windward are well known and need no discussion here; one cannot but consider that in this case the doctrine, as is often the case with formulae and rules of thumb proved, though a good servant a bad master. If Knowles had pressed sail and brought on an action to leeward as quickly

<sup>1</sup> The evidence of the pilot of 'Cornwall' and that of Captain Taylor are particularly convincing in this relation.

as was possible he would have stood a good chance of being up with the enemy before their line was well formed and of bringing on a pell-mell battle in which the individual superiority of his crews would not improbably have given him a victory, and in any case would have left him between the enemy and their port at Havana.

If the battle be compared with the actions of Anson and Hawke of the previous year we see even more. Coming up as the British squadron did from astern, the approach was not greatly dissimilar to both of these and to that of Hawke in particular. If Knowles had been able to cast aside the line and had attacked the rear ships as he came up, he might have destroyed the rear before the van could succour it; but in making this comparison it is only just to bear in mind that both the Admirals referred to were in possession of forces greatly superior to the enemy, while Knowles had but a bare equality, so that to attack in chase would have been a more notable departure from custom and would have involved greater risks than in the battles off Finisterre.

The court found also, and with undeniable justice, that Knowles should have kept the 'Oxford' in the line, and should have ordered the 'Canterbury' ahead when he saw the 'Warwick' was not coming up. In reducing his line to the number of that of the enemy Knowles was again conforming to that idol of inferior minds—convention. In keeping the 'Canterbury' astern he was acting rather as an artillerist than a tactician, and attaching an importance to the larger guns of the 'Canterbury' which at that moment was not existent, as the ship carrying the heavier ordnance was too far off to use her weapons. By 10 o'clock in the forenoon it was already evident that 'Warwick' was not drawing up and was keeping 'Canterbury' out of action. No considerations of the heavier armament of 'Canterbury' should have influenced him to continue to keep her astern. By delaying till three in the afternoon to order her ahead he lost her services for two important hours.

The four Captains accused him of misconduct and dishonourable action in keeping to windward when his maintopmast was shot away, and in not shifting his flag on board another ship to continue the chase. "Our Admiral," wrote Innes in his Journal, "to the great dishonour of the British flag, did not imitate the conduct of Lord Sandwich, Admiral Spragge, etc., but kept both the Cornwall and his Majesty's flag out of action, tho' he might have shifted his flag on board any ship of the squadron, being fine easy weather with smooth water, and his boats passing from the rear to the van with messages." Knowles, however, was able clearly to prove that he was out of action no longer than was necessary. He explained that his reason for not shifting his flag was

that he did not wish to delay the pursuit. It is nevertheless true that he could have made the change, as his flag Captain was sent in a boat to the other ships to order them to pursue hotly. But the court was fully satisfied that Knowles's courage was beyond cavil, and merely found that he made an error in judgment in not shifting his flag. The accusers tried further to prove that by his absence the pursuit lacked direction, and that without an Admiral to guide them the Captains were lost—not an unimportant point to note as a result of a doctrine of centralised control. "There being no other commanding officer than Admiral Knowles," said the Captain of the 'Warwick,' "and he not conducting the action after dark, no captain without the Admiral's authority could take upon him to hoist the proper lights and take the direction of the squadron upon him, or else we should have been able with great ease to have cut off Admiral Spinola from the Havana (who had his topmasts shot away) and perhaps some other ships if they had stayed by him<sup>1</sup>." Captain Innes did not see when he wrote those words how cruelly he was criticising himself and his brother Captains. Brodie had no such views. When asked whether, if there had been a commanding officer to collect the ships after dark a greater victory might not have been obtained, he replied with admirable commonsense: "I think if every ship had done her duty becoming a British man-of-war, we might have obtained a more complete victory; but how far the presence of a commanding officer may animate, I don't know. I wanted no commanding officer to animate me,"—a reply refreshing in its simple commonsense. Brodie's evidence drew from one of the members of the court an exclamation of applause. "The oldest officers in our service," he declared, "might be glad to give up all the glory of their actions to have acted as Captain Brodie did on that day<sup>2</sup>."

The last sea battle of the war had been fought, appropriately enough on the Jamaica station—the theatre of the differences which had caused the original war between England and Spain. If we cast a glance back through the years from 1739 to 1748 we shall see how far during that time the Jamaica squadron succeeded in its objects.

The squadrons which first went out under Commodore Brown and Admiral Vernon were designed to protect British trade. This was their principal object; secondary to it was the attack upon foreign trade. The protection to British trade was afforded principally by the

<sup>1</sup> Journal of 'Warwick.'

<sup>2</sup> Brodie, who had lost an arm, was passed over in the promotion for flag rank notwithstanding the strong support of his claims in Parliament by Sir John Jarvis, who said that "a more gallant officer, a person of more zeal, of more true courage or of more enthusiastic spirit of enterprise, never was in his Majesty's service" (*Memoirs of Earl St Vincent*, vol. II. pp. 94-95).

destruction of two Spanish bases, Porto Bello and Chagres, and by the use of cruising ships, great and small, in the areas affected by the privateers. When troops became available, the offensive was taken in the form of the great expedition against Cartagena, aimed at the destruction of the whole of the trade system which depended upon that outlet from Terra Firma. The failure of that expedition, and the losses involved, constrained the Commanders to measures of a less far reaching nature. The attack upon Santiago was primarily a defensive measure aiming at the capture and destruction of an important privateer base; that designed against Panama however was offensive, directed against the whole of the trade from Peru. If it had been successful, its effects would have been nearly as great as those of the capture of Cartagena. It cannot be doubted that if the Ministry from the beginning had had a clear idea as to the most effectual measures against Spain, and had provided the means for executing them without delay, Spain would have been reduced to a condition of great distress long before French aid could have been forthcoming. The Ministry knew very well the course of Spanish trade, the importance of Havana, Cartagena, Porto Bello and Vera Cruz, but were unable to make up their minds which to attack; nor indeed, though war was inevitable in May, did they at that time seriously begin to consider and determine what they were going to do, or to prepare the forces which would be required. A blow struck immediately on the outbreak would have gone far towards limiting the European war.

The spread of hostilities in Europe rendered the Jamaica station less important. West Indian strategy reverted to its original form of trade protection. Attacks upon Spanish ports on the main—Puerto Cabello and Caraccas—were undertaken, but they were but small operations of an offensive order, the one aimed at the capture of shipping, the other at the capture of a local point of distribution of trade. They were not a part of any regular policy; and even if both had succeeded it is doubtful whether they would have materially affected the course of the war. In this case neither was successful, but the squadron which undertook them was crippled for months both from damages to the ships and from losses in irreplaceable men. The attacks, however, were not wholly without local effect. They caused a great disturbance to shipping, and a temporary cessation of export to Spain, all of which would have some result; but at the best they were pin-pricks, which, uncoordinated, could not produce any serious effect.

Trade, on the whole, was effectively defended. Nothing could prevent losses altogether, and such as were sustained were more than balanced by the disturbance and damage caused to the enemy's trade.

But the losses inflicted on the enemy were not as serious as they might have been. The convoy system of the French, in spite of many defects, secured their great fleets, and the captures made by the British were principally "runners" and small bodies of ships. It was impossible when both France and Spain were our enemies to attack the trade of both, unless the British squadron should be greatly increased. The large convoys of the French were escorted by a force usually of not less than three ships. To destroy these fleets it was necessary to have a superior force constantly cruising in their lines of passage; this was rarely possible. Therein lay our difficulty. Nor would it have been wise to strengthen the foreign squadrons so long as the principal offensive force—the Western Squadron—could not be kept at sea in sufficient numbers. But what, in fact, was needed, was a squadron in home waters strong enough to defeat the escorts and capture the convoys when they sailed from the Biscay ports, and another to defeat the smaller escorts which completed the voyage to, and started on the voyage from, the western areas. Knowles saw that clearly enough, so did Legge and Pocock; and if the war had continued such a disposition would have become possible.

One further point stands out—how valuable in those outer seas even a small expeditionary force would have been. It would have enabled the Commanders-in-Chief to have put into execution the most decisive of all measures of trade protection—the capture of the enemies' bases. None of them except the greatest was strongly defended. Together with their capture there would always have been the additional gain of the shipping, privateers and merchantships—themselves potential privateers, since all were armed, and with crews who were always ready to go a-privateering when trade was slack—which were sheltering in the ports. Blockade, as an experience at Martinique shewed, is a tedious and ineffective measure even against a small island. It absorbs the services of many ships which are required elsewhere, and precludes operations against other ports and objectives until the blockaded island shall have surrendered; and it may be rendered ineffective by the greed of traders and the limitations imposed by international law. From the early days of Warren's command, supplies, which the British Admirals endeavoured to cut off with the object of reducing the island, were carried in by British, colonial, allied and neutral ships<sup>1</sup>. Nor did declarations of blockade prevent neutrals from

<sup>1</sup> "Their Lordships," wrote Warren on Feb. 7th, 1745, "will please to observe by these proceedings even of his Majesty's own subjects as well as the Dutch and Danes, how difficult it is for an officer in my situation to distress the enemy in that most tender point of provision. As the proof which the Law requires makes it almost impossible to defeat them if our allies and subjects act with that precaution

loading openly and sending their ships. The Dutch Governor of St Eustatius, to whom Warren sent remonstrances for permitting this trade to continue, replied with perfect courtesy but no lack of determination, that he must decline to regard the islands as blockaded so long as the enemy's privateers were able "frequently to go out and return uninterrupted." The thorny question of contraband, traders' rights, the powers of the Dutch under the Treaties of 1674 and of Utrecht were so difficult to solve that Commanders were at a loss to know what they might do. "I as yet," wrote Warren later, "have had no experience whether the Courts of Admiralty here will consider the French islands as blockaded and condemn neutral vessels carrying provisions...tho' I observe that by the Secret Treaty of 1674 with the Dutch, victuals is one of the articles with which they are not to supply his Majesty's enemies<sup>1</sup>." Hedged about by so many restrictions, blockade proved a blunted weapon; but even if they were removed the fact remained that the enemy garrisons could still hold their forts which commanded and defended the anchorages. Trade might come, but privateers could still operate, though diminished owing to lack both of supplies and men.

Far more efficacious was a military expedition, provided it were well and secretly prepared, and acted with swiftness. Instead of the squadron being wholly occupied for a long period upon the one operation of blockade its services would be needed for a short time only; and when the forts were captured and the harbours in our hands the rest of the island must surrender also; the enemy's trade would be effectually destroyed and our own securely protected. West Indian operations have an evil reputation, but this is largely due to their having gone beyond the measures necessary for defence of trade and developed into campaigns of conquest of territory. In Knowles's schemes the view was always a limited one—to capture the port, destroy the fortifications and so render the place useless as a base. Kept within these limits great numbers of troops were not needed. The nature of such operations, also, did not involve a prolonged stay on shore, which, at that period, was invariably accompanied by sickness.

In general, the operations both on the Jamaica and Leeward Islands stations demonstrate the need for ample small vessels perpetually cruising, and never allowing themselves to be lulled into security by

that their prudence and cunning will naturally suggest to them. Had it not been for these supplies the inhabitants must have abandoned Martinique and the islands adjacent, and only have left garrisons in such of their fortified places as are in the best posture for defence, in order to keep possession.' Cf., in this connexion, Duncan's complaints when off the Texel. *Spencer Papers*, vol. II. p. 181.

<sup>1</sup> Captain's Letters.



temporary cessation of attacks; the importance of bases in a war of commerce attack, and therefore the need for preventing an enemy from securing or keeping any; the need of superior numbers in all classes of ships which the enemy may permanently maintain on the station; and the necessity of being ready rapidly to detach from the main forces in home waters a force capable of defeating any force which may be sent out by the enemy. The naval officer requires to be thoroughly acquainted with the trade systems of the enemy and of his own country, and the merchant captain requires to be prepared in peace to meet the circumstances with which he will find himself confronted in war.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LAST YEARS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

VICE ADMIRAL HENRY MEDLEY, who succeeded Rowley as Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, took over the command on his predecessor's departure in the beginning of 1746. He had been employed during the war in the Channel squadron, first as captain of the 'Nassau' in 1741, and during the three successive years as Captain of the Fleet to Sir John Norris. He was promoted to Rear Admiral of the White in June, 1744, and had subsequently commanded a cruising squadron in the Soundings until the time when he was appointed to command the convoy which he brought out to the Mediterranean<sup>1</sup>.

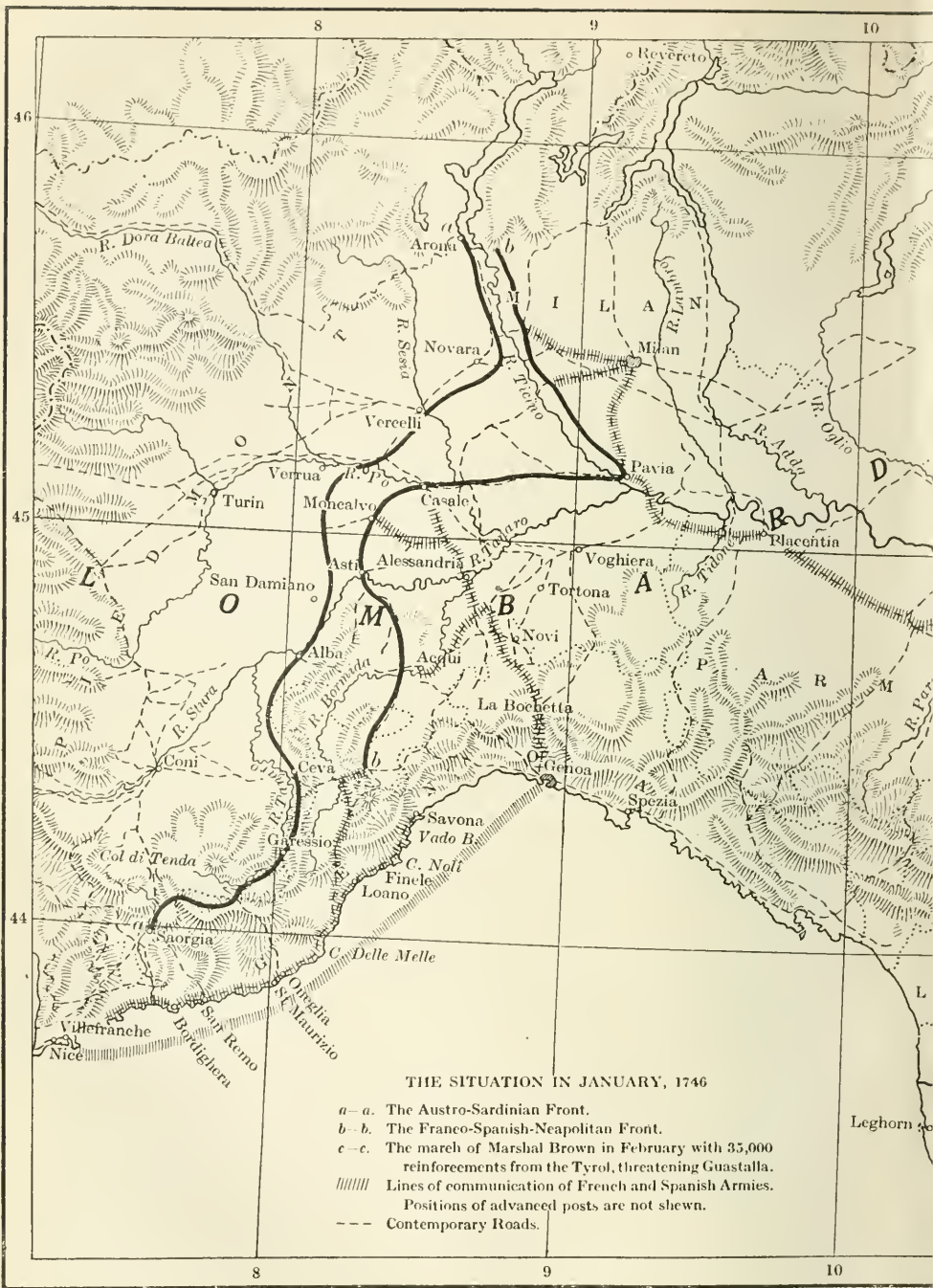
Medley's instructions, dated July 27th, 1745, directed him "to act in such manner as shall be concerted and agreed with the King of Sardinia, the commander of the Queen of Hungary's troops in Italy, and Mr Villettes." A résumé was given of the attitude recently taken up by the Genoese Government which had made a definite declaration that Genoa would act as an auxiliary to France, Spain and Naples; and the general conduct he was to pursue was outlined in the following clauses:

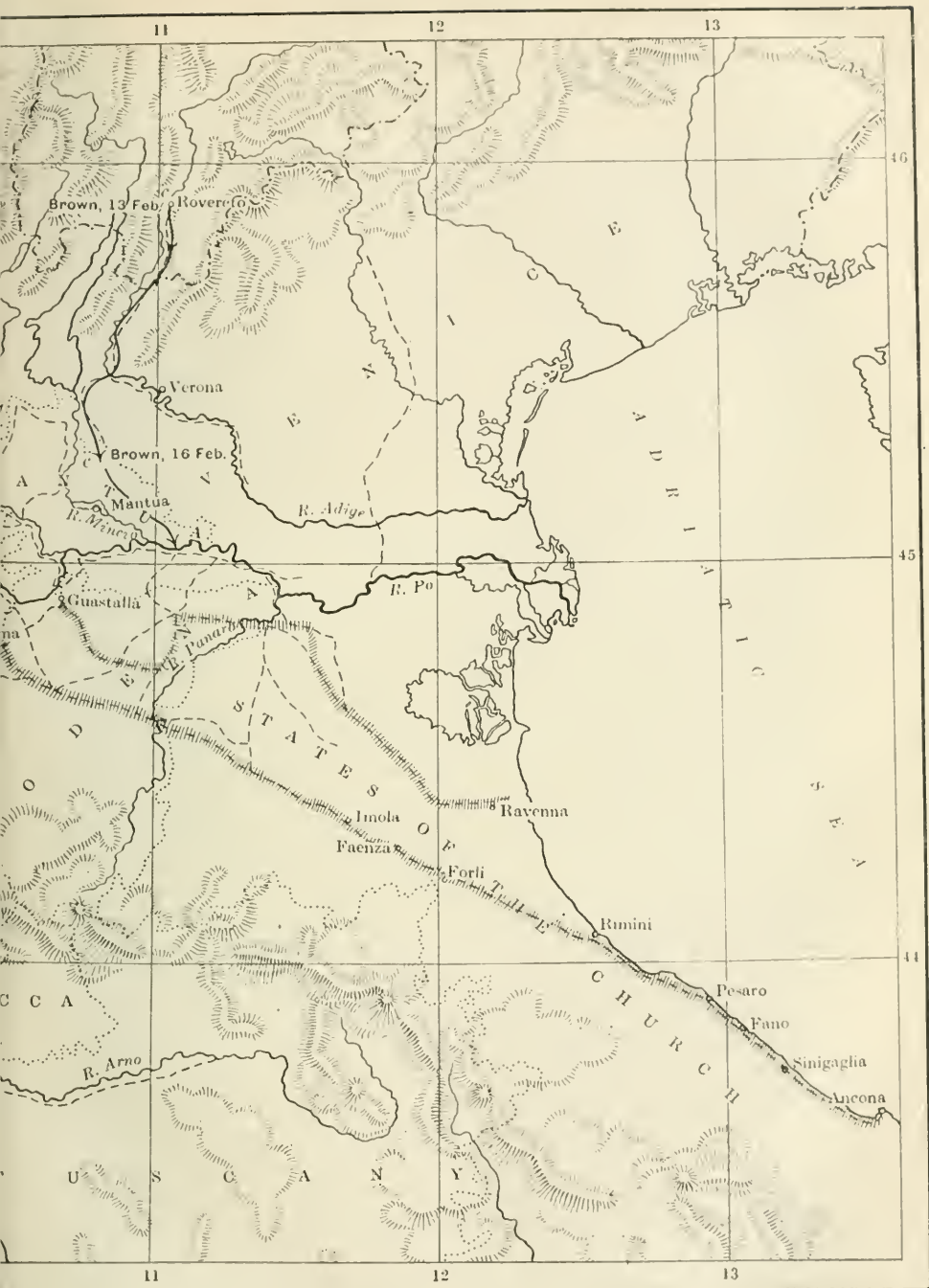
"The principal points you are to have in view are, to assist protect and defend the States and Dominions of Italy belonging to the Queen of Hungary, the King of Sardinia and the Great Duke, his Majesty's Allies; to use your utmost endeavours to annoy his Majesty's enemies by destroying their ships and embarkations; and to protect and defend the trade of his Majesty's subjects in the Mediterranean. And you will also take proper measures for intercepting any ships or vessels that are employed in carrying warlike stores, ammunition, etc., for the use of the French and Spaniards."

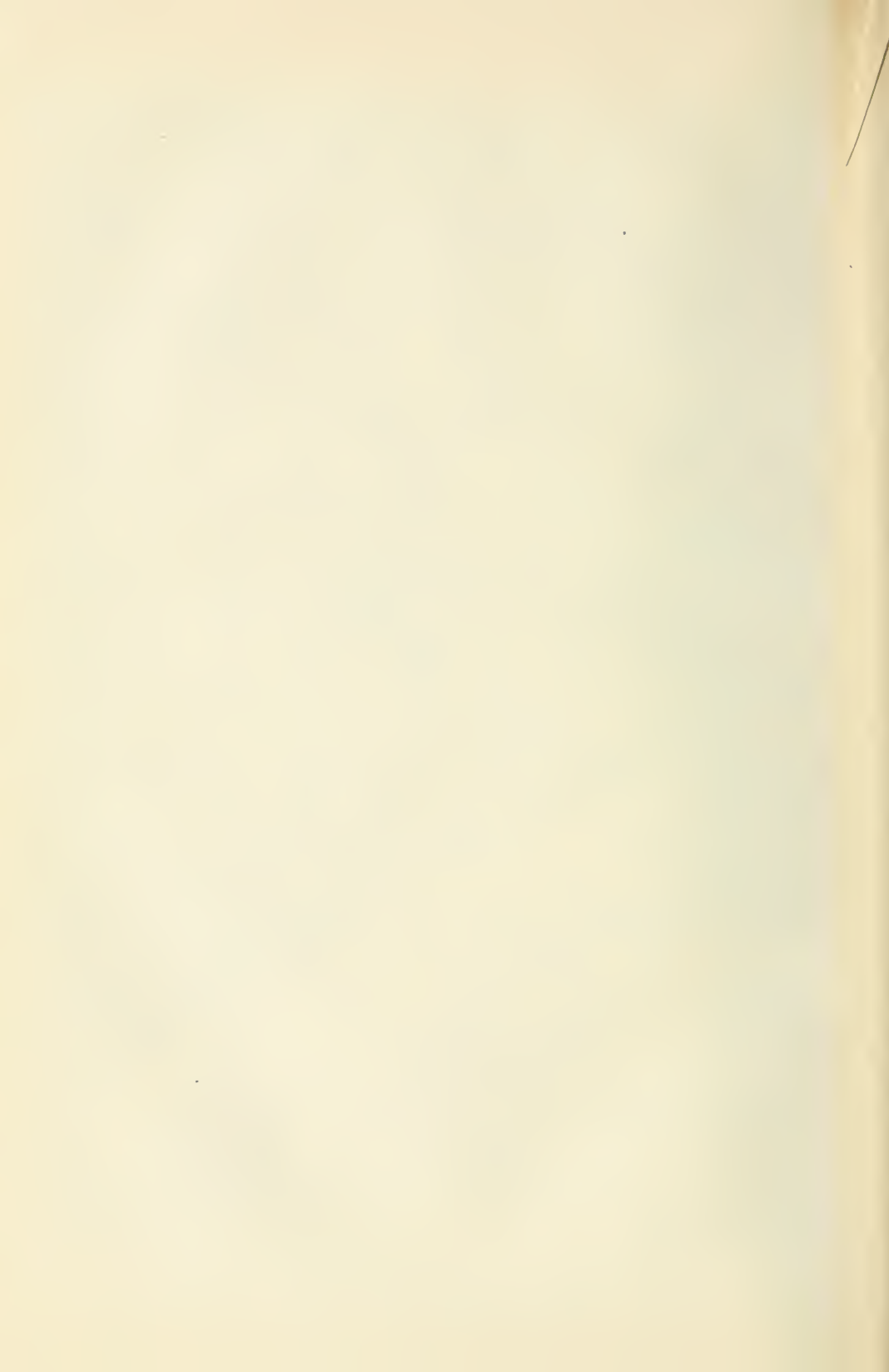
At the time that Medley took command of the station a change was taking place in the grouping of the military forces on the continent. Pressure on the resources of the Queen of Hungary had become so great that Maria Theresa, not strong enough to resist the simultaneous attacks upon all parts of her dominions, gave up her attempts to recover Silesia and Glatz. The evidence of the year's campaign had shewn her the impossibility of contending at the same time with Prussia and her other enemies. To continue to do so would end in the loss not only of her northern provinces but of those in Italy as well. On December 25th therefore, she submitted to the inevitable and, by the treaty of Dresden, ceded Silesia and Glatz to Prussia. Frederick thereupon withdrew from

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Dictionary of National Biography*.









the war; his withdrawal set free some of the Austrian troops which had been engaged in the Silesian campaign and these could now be employed in Italy where they were badly needed.

The Italian campaign of 1745 had placed the Spaniards in possession of the duchies of Parma and Placentia. They held the Milanese and the country round Alessandria. The important towns of Guastalla, Parma, Placentia, Pavia and Milan were occupied by Spanish troops, but the citadels of Milan and Alessandria were as yet not taken. The French held Casale, Moncalvo, Asti and Acqui, maintaining their communications with France through the Genoese Riviera. The combined Franco-Spanish front may thus be said to have stretched from San Remo through Genoa, inland through the Bochetta Pass, and up to Guastalla. These Bourbon armies were faced by those of the Austro-Sardinians whose line ran from Saorgio, through Garesio, Coni, Alba, San Damiano, Verrua, Vercelli, Novara and Arona. The King of Sardinia's headquarters were at Saorgio, Prince Lichtenstein's at Novara.

The armies were fairly evenly matched in point of numbers and no immediate advantage was to be expected on either side. But when the Treaty of Dresden had been signed, 30,000 Austrian troops under the command of General Count Brown were ordered to move immediately from the Tyrol into Venice towards the extreme left of the Spanish line at Guastalla. Every possible effort was made to obtain the full advantage of the superiority which this transfer would afford. The troops proceeded by forced marches towards Mantua, and arrangements were made for a portion of them—eleven regiments of foot and six of cavalry—to be moved by sea from Trieste to the mouth of the Po. To cover their passage Medley was requested by Maricone<sup>1</sup> on January 9th to send some ships. "One or two frigates," wrote the agent, "will be indispensable in the Adriatic if it is desired to hinder the enemy's transports and assist our own." This request came however too late for Medley to be able to afford assistance in hastening the arrival of the Austrian troops, for although he at once despatched the 'Feversham' and 'Seaford,' under the command of Captain Willson, they were unable to arrive at Trieste soon enough to escort the transports. To avoid delay the troops had, therefore, to be sent by land, the first of them reaching Rovereto on February 1<sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub>.

Although the British frigates were too late to convoy these regiments their services were needed in the Adriatic to protect the subsequent reinforcements and the service of supplying the army with provisions, forage and war material. The long land route would thus be avoided

<sup>1</sup> Maricone was the imperial agent at Genoa, at this moment working at Leghorn as Genoa was in possession of the enemy.

and in addition to this advantage the frigates could interfere with the passage of the enemies' supplies, consisting principally of grain and forage which the Neapolitans had been embarking at Ancona and carrying round to Genoa. In securing the allied sea communications Willson automatically prejudiced those of the enemy, a result peculiar to sea warfare in which the lines of communication are common to both belligerents. The two British frigates thus rendered valuable service, both offensive and defensive; during the six months from April to October during which they were in the Adriatic their presence afforded such protection to the passage that very few of the Imperial barks were taken by the enemy, in spite of constant attacks by the Neapolitan galleots upon the convoys. Engagements were frequent; success was regular.

Still more important than the sea command in the Adriatic was that of the inshore routes between Antibes and Genoa. Between these places ran the line of communications of the French army in Italy, the supplies for which must pass either by land or sea. The land route was slow, expensive and precarious. The roads were bad, the country difficult, and the line was threatened from its flank by the Sardinians, who watched for every opportunity of falling upon it. One great attack, made early in 1746 under the personal command of King Charles Emmanuel, was only repulsed with great difficulty by the French garrison of San Remo. The advantage of sea transport was thus obvious: and the anxiety felt by Maillebois, the French General, for his line of communications throughout this campaign is clear evidence of the important help which the British Navy could afford to the Allies. Unfortunately there was still an insufficiency of small craft to close the inshore route completely to the French; requests for their services, and testimony to their importance, abound in the despatches of this time<sup>1</sup>.

Thus the manner in which the Admiral carried out his instructions

<sup>1</sup> "Mr Mann wrote me word there was a want of small vessels to intercept the enemy's barks with ammunition and provisions, which daily creep along shore. . . ." (Rowley to Medley. Nov. 29th, 1745).

"Cardinal Albani acquaints me that a very considerable number of barks with recruits, ammunition and provisions daily pass by the ports in the Ecclesiastical state for the coast of Genoa. . . . From Genoa we are informed that all sorts of embarkations daily arrive there from the west and other parts" (H. Mann to Medley. January 21st, 1746).

"All sorts of military stores and victuals are still sent from the Kingdom of Naples. . . . They have large stores of wheat and barley at Terracina which they transport to the Riviera of Genoa" (Maricone to Medley. March 20th, 1746).

"The sending three vessels to cruise along the Riviera, east and west of Genoa, has proved a most happy and well-timed measure, for. . . we have gained considerable advantage in Lombardy. If you send other ships to range along the coast from Nice as far as the States of Tuscany they will be of great assistance to the war in Lombardy" (Maricone to Medley. March 27th, 1746).



to assist the Queen of Hungary and the King of Sardinia, was by using his squadron mainly to prevent supplies from reaching the enemy by sea and to protect the passage of those intended for the allied armies. For this purpose a great number of small craft, capable of continual cruising and armed sufficiently to attack the transporting or defending vessels of the enemy, was needed, together with ships of force to cover their operations from attack by the heavy squadrons of the enemy. "Small vessels properly supported by ships of defence are the most capable for executing this service," Medley truly wrote; "I wish to be better provided with both<sup>1</sup>."

The enemies' heavy ships were divided between the ports of Toulon, Carthage and Cadiz, but no individual squadron was of great strength. At Toulon nine<sup>2</sup> ships were reported, of which five were not ready; at Carthage 13 ships, most of which were unready; and at Cadiz there was a varying number, never very large, principally employed in meeting the Spanish homeward bound trade on the rare occasions on which it made an appearance. Carthage was the most active of the ports, and rumour said that every effort was being made to complete all the ships there, seamen to man them being hired from the Genoese.

In relation to the operations of the Mediterranean squadron in the Italian campaign, Cadiz was an excentric point, which concerned them only so far as it was possible that the squadron there might join that at Carthage. Medley, who until the end of 1745 had kept a force at Gibraltar consisting of seven ships under Captain Cooper, decided to withdraw this force and concentrate his whole attention upon watching Carthage. Stationed off that port he would be between the two principal bodies of the enemy, and would afford cover at the same time to the movements taking place in other parts of the Mediterranean. Medley's squadron, after the Gibraltar detachment joined up, consisted of 13<sup>3</sup> heavy ships; the principal operations it had to cover were the patrol of the Riviera and Italian coast, and the attempt to capture Corsica under Captain Townshend.

This project was the weak point in the plan of operations. The island, which belonged to the Republic of Genoa, was in a state of insurrection under the leadership of Count Rivarola, a Corsican

<sup>1</sup> Medley to Duke of Newcastle, February 17th, 1746. S.P. Dom. Naval.

<sup>2</sup> De Lage's squadron of 2 ships and 1 frigate.

Fitting out	2	..	..	1	..
Not ready	5	..	..	—	
	9 ships		2 frigates		

<sup>3</sup> 'Russell,' 'Boyne,' 'Norfolk,' 'Princess Caroline,' 'Cambridge,' 'Nassau,' 'Revenge,' 'Essex,' 'Royal Oak,' 'Rupert,' 'Dunkirk,' 'Bedford,' 'Guernsey,' and two fireships.

nobleman, and a number of partisan chieftains. The King of Sardinia, long anxious to obtain possession of Corsica, saw in this situation a favourable opportunity for its capture, and believing that the insurgents needed only the support of a squadron to overthrow the Genoese garrison, solicited the aid of some British ships. His request, strongly supported by Horace Mann, was favourably viewed by the Government in London who gave orders to Medley to make the necessary detachment. But while the Admiral was strong enough to prevent the Carthagenan squadron from covering the transport of Spanish troops to Genoa or from joining the ships at Cadiz for any operation to the westward, he had not ships enough at the same time to blockade Toulon. This important French base was therefore open, and de Lage's squadron was at liberty to go in and out with impunity. The small craft patrolling the French coast and the ships taking part in the Corsican expedition were thereby liable to find the Toulon squadron falling on their backs at any moment. Townshend's despatches express his continual uneasiness; an uneasiness which must always be felt when an elementary canon of sea warfare is being violated.

Besides being thus exposed to attack, the expedition absorbed ships which could have been more usefully employed in other parts. The closing of the off shore route along the Riviera to the enemy's supplies was of far greater importance to the common cause than the wrenching of Corsica from the Genoese, an operation which even if it were successful would in no way affect the campaign on the continent, where the decision must necessarily lie. It was not even to be justified as a diversion, for it could not attract troops from the main land; for the same naval forces which made the undertaking possible at the same time barred the passage—commanded, in fact, the communications—between Genoa and the island. Like the Austrian proposal to attack Naples in 1744 it was a misdirection of effort, an offensive which could produce no effect upon the main course of the war; and the King of Sardinia, though desiring the aggrandisement of his kingdom could not spare the troops necessary to achieve it, and relied upon that broken reed, local discontent. Thus, from the points of view of both major and minor strategy the expedition was a mistake; and it followed that the vessels employed upon the services were wasting their energy in an unfruitful enterprise when they could have been used with benefit to the common cause off the coast of Provence and the Genoese littoral.

As the year progressed this became more and more evident. From the first Medley had strongly protested against the whole enterprise describing it as "an ill-concerted scheme." He pointed out that no

fewer than 12 ships were absorbed in an undertaking the successful outcome of which was in his opinion impossible so long as it was conducted by quarrelling and jealous local chieftains, with undisciplined followers and without central direction or control<sup>1</sup>. In spite, however, of his objections, the strong pressure brought on him by the allied powers through the meddling Horace Mann, obliged him to renew the attempt. Sailing from Mahon in March with his whole fleet he reconnoitred Carthagea on the 13th. Having assured himself that the enemy was as yet unable to move—only 11 sail out of the 13 Spanish ships in harbour were rigged, and of these four only had their sails bent—he detached Townshend to Cagliari, and proceeded with the remainder of his force to cruise between Cape de Gatt and Cape Palos in order to be in the way of intercepting any ships coming from Cadiz to join those at Carthagea, sending at the same time a couple of frigates off Cadiz to pick up any information as to the state of things in that port.

The ships<sup>2</sup> detached from the main body for the Corsican expedition under Townshend, parted company on March 19th, proceeding first to Mahon to embark siege artillery, ammunition and certain military stores. Ten days later Townshend sailed with the 'Bedford,' 'Essex' two bombs and their tenders. At 8 o'clock on the following morning a strange sail was sighted and chased by the 'Essex' for over five hours, when the pursuit led the English ship into sight of four large ships, a force apparently superior to the two British 70-gun ships. Townshend, without making any personal examination of the enemy, proceeded to Corsica to pick up reinforcements. At Cagliari he found the 'Nonsuch' and 'Antelope.' Joining them to his force he returned immediately to sea to search for the enemy whom he believed to be de Lage's squadron, "as it will be impossible," he wrote, "to think of making any attempt upon Corsica while he remains on the coast." But he saw nothing of the Frenchmen during his cruise and after a short search returned to the island.

De Lage had indeed been at sea. Leaving Toulon on March 21st, with the 'Oriflamme,' 54, 'Diane,' 30, and 'Volage,' 30, and cruising in a scattered formation, he had been sighted three days later by the 'Stirling Castle,' Captain Fawler, who was on his way to join Medley off Carthagea. Fawler attacked and took the 'Volage.' But the remainder of the French squadron coming upon him later, he was obliged to abandon his prize, which he did without destroying her. De Lage returned

<sup>1</sup> Medley. In letters, February 10th, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> 'Bedford,' 'Essex,' 'Leopard,' 'Dartmouth,' 'Antelope,' 'Liverpool,' 'Fire-drake' and 'Carcass' bombs. Others joined Townshend later at Corsica.

to Toulon on April 18th with his squadron intact, having made a four weeks' cruise of no importance. Fowler, for abandoning the 'Volage' to the enemy without attempting to destroy her, was tried by court martial and found guilty of negligent performance of his duty. He was severely reprimanded and mulct of all personal pay due to him from his command of the 'Stirling Castle.'

When Townshend's despatch describing his cruise to Corsica and subsequent search for de Lage reached the Admiralty his conduct seemed to the Board to have been highly improper. He had made it appear that he had fallen in with four ships, but being too far to leeward had been unable to speak with them though he chased them throughout the night of the 29th. "I judged them," he wrote, "to be ships of war and belonging to the enemy, but not being able to speak with them that night, I steered again for Caliali, and going round the south end of Sardinia, I fell in with just the number and chased till I discovered them to be the same squadron, which convinced me of their being ships of war, and being so much superior to me, I used my utmost endeavours to secure the bombs and tenders at Caliali as soon as possible, where I arrived on the 2nd April."

This letter undoubtedly gives the impression that Townshend had actually sighted four ships of the enemy, and instead of examining them closely, had parted from them. He had then called ships away from their stations without sufficient cause, thereby delaying the operations. In consequence orders were given to try him by court martial<sup>1</sup>. The court found that Townshend had met no squadron of enemy ships, nor had he seen and chased any ships "to discover them to be such"; but that he had seen one sail only and ordered the 'Essex' to chase her, which she did, and signalled three more. They found that Townshend's account of having met and chased an enemy squadron was founded entirely on the 'Essex's' report, that the 'Bedford' (Townshend's ship) could not possibly have come up with either of the ships before dark or without losing company with the bombs and their tenders. The charge of cowardice or misconduct thus fell to the ground. But he was found guilty of having written letters to the Admiralty and his Commander-in-Chief<sup>2</sup> with "great carelessness and negligence, which letters contained very false and erroneous accounts of his proceedings." For this he was adjudged to write to the Admiralty and the

<sup>1</sup> The order is signed by Sandwich, Vere Beauclerk, Anson and Geo. Grenville. Horace Mann in his letters (vol. II. pp. 261-2) attributes to Lord Sandwich the instigation to try Townshend in consequence of the Commodore's relationship with Sir R. Walpole. Elsewhere (cf. *Nat. Dict. Biog.*) he says that Townshend was accused of cowardice because of his inability to express himself.

<sup>2</sup> Dated April 7th, 1746 and April 20th, 1746.

Vice Admiral, acknowledging and begging pardon for his fault and neglect.

Throughout April the operations in Corsica dragged on in a thoroughly unsatisfactory manner, as is usual in campaigns conducted by local factions without discipline. Agreement between the many petty chieftains was impossible, there was no chance of regular troops being sent to form a nucleus round which the partisans could coalesce, and no concerted action could consequently be arranged by Townshend with the guerilla bodies which constituted the forces of the malcontents. So hopeless did the whole enterprise appear to the Commodore that so soon as he was sure that de Lage was back in Toulon, he took advantage of the opportunity to run over to Leghorn and confer with Mann, recommending most strongly that the whole operation should be abandoned. He pointed out the impossibility of maintaining a sufficient force upon the Genoese coast—the really vital area—and at the same time supporting the Corsicans, an argument that strongly impressed the King of Sardinia who at that moment was complaining of the weakness of the Riviera blockade. The whole naval force on that coast then amounted to six or seven sail at the most “though we never were in more want of a numerous squadron here than at present, when so much depends on the operations of it<sup>1</sup>.”

Medley's representations to the Admiralty on the same subject had by this time—the end of May—taken effect, and the Council<sup>2</sup> agreed that the best thing for Townshend to do was to give up the Corsican venture and devote himself wholly to distressing the enemy's communications by sea, “which,” said Villetes, “it was impossible for 3 or 4 men-of-war to do; and the additions of force he had brought, with the King of Sardinia's galleys, was barely sufficient.”

The King of Sardinia, when he originally pressed for this enterprise, had done so in the belief that a large force would still remain available for the Genoese coast. When he found that this was not so he had no hesitation in agreeing to abandon the attempt. He went even further. So great an importance did he attach to the coastal blockade, and suggested reducing the squadron off Carthage in order to strengthen that on the Riviera. In describing the King's attitude, Villetes, when writing to the Duke of Newcastle, said that his Majesty quite appreciated the necessity for destroying the Spanish squadron,

<sup>1</sup> Villetes to the Duke of Newcastle, May 30th, 1746. Secretary of State, In letters, 4116.

<sup>2</sup> “By the courier. . . I received many letters which point out to me. . . that it is the opinion of the Lords of the Admiralty and of the Ministry that it is vain to persist in the enterprise against Corsica.” Mann to Townshend, May 24/June 4, 1746. Hist. Man. Com. *Papers of Lady du Cane*, p. 118.

but he must also insist that the "other part" of the duties required equal attention—namely, the seconding of the efforts being made on land. "If," continued Villetes, "as we proposed and flattered ourselves, the French and Spanish armies could be confined to the Genoese mountains, and be obliged to draw all their subsidies from the Riviera, both they and the town of Genoa itself must soon, by our attending watchfully to the cutting off their communication by sea, be reduced to starve, and consequently be ruined by desertion and sickness... instead of which the enemy will from want of a sufficient number of British ships be able to get all they want from other parts<sup>1</sup>." The strengthening of the force would also mean that de Lage's squadron could be watched, French convoys intercepted and the coast blockade covered. It is curious to note that while this was so clearly recognised by the King, he did not also see that the squadron off Carthage was an essential factor in attaining his ends, nor that his proposal to reduce the cover, or remove it from its position of observation upon the enemy's main body, would expose the coast to the very dangers he wished to avoid.

The anxiety of the military commanders at this moment to receive all possible support from the sea was most natural. The situation in Lombardy was developing favourably and every advantage had to be taken of it. The Austrian reinforcements had obliged the Spaniards to retreat to Placentia, whither they were closely followed by General Brown; and at the same time the King of Sardinia was concentrating near Alessandria to attack the French at Novi<sup>2</sup>. Corsica was therefore abandoned and the whole detached squadron was brought up to the Riviera<sup>3</sup>.

The Austro-Sardinians steadily continued to press back the Franco-Spanish line. Milan, Alessandria and Voghiera were evacuated by the Spaniards, Casale, Moncalvo, Asti and Acqui by the French. On the 14th May<sup>4</sup> the French fell back to Novi and the Spaniards began concentrating their army at Placentia, a city Don Philip urgently desired to retain.

<sup>1</sup> Villetes to Duke of Newcastle, May 30th, 1746. Secretary of State, In letters, 4116.

<sup>2</sup> "M. de Maillebois, resté dans les positions vers Novi, avait resserré les cantonnements, se préoccupant surtout de couvrir la route de Tortone et celle de Gênes." Pajol, *Les Guerres sous Louis XV*, vol. III. p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> 'Bedford,' 70, 'Essex,' 70, 'Nonsuch,' 'Antelope,' 'Dartmouth,' 'Liverpool,' 'Postilion'; 'Terrible' sloop, 'Carcass,' 'Firedrake' and 'Lightning,' bombs. Two of Townshend's command—'Diamond' and 'Lowestoft'—were detached to the Levant to attack French trade at Candia and protect British shipping. The 'Leopard,' also of his squadron, was absent careening, and she and the 'Feversham' in the Adriatic were under orders to join him when their services could be spared.

<sup>4</sup> All these dates are N.S.

Notwithstanding the imminence of the danger to his lengthening communications, Maillebois was forced to withdraw towards the north. On the 9th June he retired to Tortona; on the 14th the French army joined the Spaniards under the walls of Placentia, where, two days later, a fierce battle was fought which resulted in the defeat of the Franco-Spanish army by the allies under Prince Lichtenstein. Further retreat thus became necessary. The combined army, hemmed in, could not live without supplies in the circumscribed country, already much exhausted, round Placentia. The harassed Commanders were therefore obliged to withdraw, and they passed over the Po into the Milanese. The Bourbon army was now in a wholly distressing situation. Reduced to 25,000 men<sup>1</sup> it was nearly surrounded by a force of about 50,000, and its position was rendered more insecure by the utter failure of the Spanish King to render the aid he had promised. French reinforcements, however, were hastened by the Versailles government to the assistance of the imperilled army; and these, by great efforts, succeeded in keeping open the sole line of communications from the Bochetta to the Tenda Pass, in spite of constant attacks all along it by the Piedmontese forces.

Throughout July a steady pressure on all sides gradually restricted the Franco-Spanish army to the area between the Adda and the Lambro. A gigantic catastrophe appeared imminent. Desperate action along their narrow line of retreat was necessary. It was decided to try and cut through the enemy, regain Tortona, and retire into France. As the outcome of a series of rapid and brilliant operations conducted by Maillebois a successful battle was fought at Tidone, which enabled the whole army to escape into Genoese territory, closely followed by the Austrians<sup>2</sup>. On September 4th (N.S.) the French reached Savona. The Austrians, frustrated in their attempt to surround the enemy, appeared before Genoa on the same day, and the city opened its gates and capitulated to General de Botta on September 6th.

While this great campaign was proceeding on land, the ships under Townshend which had been cruising on the Genoese coast had made a large number of captures of vessels with military supplies for the enemy's army greatly to the satisfaction of our allies<sup>3</sup>. The withdrawal of the enemy towards the coast afforded the squadron an opportunity of more direct cooperation in the fighting. As the army passed along the roads close to the sea, Townshend moved both his

<sup>1</sup> Large garrisons had been left in Placentia and Tortona.

<sup>2</sup> Its route was via Tortona, Serravalla, and the Col di Bochetta.

<sup>3</sup> Duke of Newcastle to Medley, August 22nd, 1746. "The King of Sardinia has expressed his lively pleasure at the work the squadron has done and begs it may not be removed from the coast."

large and small vessels as close in as possible and harassed the retreating troops wherever his guns would reach; thereby driving them from the good and easy roads along the shore to those in the mountains, where the transport of heavy stores and artillery was a difficult matter<sup>1</sup>.

The news that the French and Spaniards were in full retreat had reached England in August. The Duke of Newcastle at once wrote (August 22nd) both to Medley and to Townshend—he supposed the latter to be still in Corsica—telling them of the situation, and that he had been informed of the intention of the King of Sardinia and General Brown to follow up the enemy and invade France. He desired both Commanders to proceed at once to the coast of Provence with all the force that could be got together, in order to support this movement of the allies. Townshend, as we have seen, had anticipated the order and had already brought all his detached ships from Corsica up to the coast. Medley, however, did not receive the letter until October.

After detaching Townshend in March he had made Gibraltar his headquarters and from that port had kept an eye upon both Cadiz and Carthagen. Cruisers worked off the two ports, and the Admiral occasionally brought the whole squadron of 16 heavy ships close inshore off either one or the other place, to shew himself to the enemy and keep them in uncertainty as to where the British squadron might be at any moment. Medley was kept well informed by means of "instruments" and felt confident that if the enemy should proceed to sea they would find it difficult to avoid him. Throughout September he cruised steadily between Cadiz and Sparte, as the presence of a French squadron at Cadiz had lent it for the time a greater importance than Carthagen, where the lack of preparations had given little cause for uneasiness. In October he sailed for Minorca for repairs with the

<sup>1</sup> Townshend to Duke of Newcastle, September 9th, 1746. The following extract from log of 'Essex' refers to these operations:

"Townshend. Log of 'Essex.'

"August 23rd. Anchored between Menton and Ventimilla, with bower and stream and brought broadside against the Pass Menton; at 7 fired 3 shot at some of the French and Spanish troops passing along the pass, the 'Leopard' and 'Carcass' bomb cannonading the camp about a mile to the west of the town of Menton; at 6 they broke the camp up... Fired 12 shot at the troops passing the Pass.

"At 9 P.M. on the 24th made a signal for seeing the troops coming into the pass. Fired several Round and Grape Shot at 4 a.m. and 4 vollies of small arms.

"From 1 p.m. on the 25th till 6 fired several shot at the troops passing the pass; they fired several small arms from the hills and wounded 2 men... at 7 we discovered a great number of them passing up on the hill in the New Road they had made out of the reach of our cannon. Saw their lights on the new Road at night and saw great numbers of them marching in the day, but none passed the old Road."

The logs of the small craft tell a similar tale.



bulk of his squadron, leaving only a few ships at Gibraltar for trade protection in the Gut.

On arrival at Mahon on October 24th he received the intelligence that the Austrian army, of 55 battalions of foot and 3000 horse, was about to enter Provence. No suggestion from London was needed to make him realize the importance of this movement, and though the Duke's letter of August 22nd had not yet reached him he immediately detached five ships to strengthen the squadron<sup>1</sup> on the French coast, and prepared to sail with the remainder as soon as they could be made ready.

The operations on the coast were progressing very favourably, the imperial troops marching close to the shore with the squadron under Hughes abreast them, carrying and convoying the stores and provisions. The pass of La Turbie had been forced on the 2nd October; and the main body of the enemy, consisting of 85 battalions, had crossed the Var in retreat on the 7th and 8th October, leaving rear-guard garrisons at Villefranche and Montalban to delay the pursuit of the Austrians.

In England the greatest hopes were entertained from the invasion, and the most particular orders were sent to Medley enjoining him in the strongest manner to employ all his ships "as may most effectually support and assist the operations of the Austrian and Piedmontese troops in France." He was ordered constantly to correspond with General Brown, and as far as practicable to undertake any thing that should be recommended by him in order to second those operations "which you are to consider your first and principal object<sup>2</sup>." At the same time as these orders were being sent to Medley the Duke of Newcastle expressed to the Duke of Bedford—First Commissioner of the Admiralty—how imperative he considered the need of a sufficient support to the invasion. "As in all probability the allied army," he wrote, "consisting of about 30,000 men, is by this time in Provence, our principal care must be, first, to engage the Queen of Hungary and the King of Sardinia to send more troops, if wanted, into France; secondly, to support these operations by our squadrons at sea, and particularly by that means to keep them constantly supplied with provisions<sup>3</sup>."

Some success was indeed badly needed at this moment to counter-balance the failures in Flanders and at l'Orient. The Flanders campaign

<sup>1</sup> This squadron was now under Captain Hughes, Townshend having been suspended pending his trial for the affair of March 30th.

<sup>2</sup> Duke of Newcastle to Medley, October 24th, 1746.

<sup>3</sup> Duke of Newcastle to Duke of Bedford, October 25th, 1746. Bedford Papers. The out letter to Medley is dated October 24th. S.P. Dom. Naval 97.

had come to end three weeks before in the defeat at Roucoux, the expedition to l'Orient had failed<sup>1</sup>, and the opening of the campaign in Provence was the one bright spot in the year's campaign. If it could be brought to a successful issue it might not improbably bring about such a withdrawal of French troops from Flanders as would seriously influence the operations of the succeeding year.

The five ships detached by Medley reached Hughes on November 10th at Villefranche, where he had arrived with a great fleet of Imperial transports and Sardinian supply vessels. Hughes at once made up a squadron of six sail to cruise off Toulon and Marseilles to intercept corn destined for those places. Preparations were begun for effecting the passage of the River Var, Hughes consulting with General Brown as to how the frigates and small craft should cooperate. All was ready by the 15th, but a heavy rain and bad weather made it necessary to postpone the operation. Medley with six ships arrived on the 17th, and on the night of the 18th, 'Phoenix,' 'Terrible,' a barcolongo and all the boats of the fleet went inshore to the westward of the mouth of the Var. At daylight they opened fire on the position taken up by the French at St Laurent which flanked the line of advance of the Austrians<sup>2</sup>. At half past seven the troops marched down to the river. A number of carpenters and seamen from the fleet were put ashore and built a bridge, and the Var was crossed with little opposition. At the same time Austrian troops which had been embarked on board the 'Phoenix' and other of the small craft were landed to the westward of the Var and falling upon the rear of the retreating enemy hastened their withdrawal. The first obstacle to the advance had been successfully overcome.

The whole of the available force of the Mediterranean squadron was now on the coast of Genoa and Provence assisting in the advance of the army and the reduction of the towns still held by the enemy, using Villefranche as the base. The ships on November 20th were disposed as follows:

At Villefranche: 'Russell' (flag), 'Burford,' 'Boyne,' 'Revenge,' 'Leopard,' 'Phoenix,' 'Lowestoft,' 'Terrible' sloop, 'Duke' fireship, a barcolongo.

<sup>1</sup> Lestock actually anchored at Spithead on his return from Quiberon on the day this letter was written—October 25th.

<sup>2</sup> The log of the 'Phoenix,' Captain Hugh Forbes, runs as follows: "19 Nov. 4.45 A.M. Tacked and stood to the westward within half-a-mile of the mouth of the Var, fired away on the French and Spanish troops as did the Terrible and Barcalonga, and the King of Sardinia's troops fired their field pieces at the same time to cover their army as they passed the Var. At half past 8 the signal was made to us by the King of Sardinia's troops to leave off firing. Left off firing and stood in shore close to the westward of the River Var as the King of Sardinia's troops marched towards the town of Cannes."

At Mahon or just going there for repair: 'Norfolk,' 'Princess Caroline,' 'Dartmouth,' 'Bedford,' 'Essex,' 'Chatham,' 'Firedrake.'

Off Toulon and Marseilles: 'Stirling Castle,' 'Royal Oak,' 'Rupert,' 'Nonsuch,' 'Antelope,' 'Roebuck.'

Off Cape Garoupe: 'Nassau,' 'Guernsey,' 'Conqueror,' fireship.

Convoy to Genoa: 'Diamond,' 'Liverpool,' 'Carcass,' bomb.

Coming from Adriatic: 'Feversham,' 'Seaford.'

At Gibraltar: 'Jersey,' 'Dunkirk,' 'Spence,' sloop, and 'Enterprise.'

It will be noticed that Carthagená was open and unwatched; but this omission was justified by the then known state of the squadron in that port. The inactivity of the Spanish fleet is indeed incomprehensible on strategic grounds, and would appear to be partly attributable to the very lukewarm sentiments entertained by the new King of Spain for the cause in which his arms were engaged. King Philip V had died on June 29/July 9, 1746. He had undertaken the war for the possession of Lombardy, at the instance of his masterful wife, Elizabeth Farnese; but his eldest son and successor, Ferdinand, while professing to his allies that he would continue his father's policy with vigour, and do all that he could to conquer Lombardy for his brother was distinctly cool when it came to action. Military supplies and reinforcements were no longer sent to the Spanish army, and naval preparations in Cadiz and Carthagená<sup>1</sup> lapsed. How greatly the powerful squadron in Carthagená could have influenced the operations on the coast of Italy is evident. Shortage of men was certainly to some extent a reason of its inactivity, but an energetic administration whole heartedly working for the cause, could have made some provision for manning at least a portion of the vessels. It is almost impossible to believe that the potential value of the Carthagená squadron was not appreciated by the Spanish Ministry. In London, the possibility that this squadron or a French force from the westward would make some effort to relieve the situation on the coast, by escorting Spanish troops from Barcelona to Toulon could not be overlooked<sup>2</sup>, and a reinforcement of four ships under Admiral John Byng was ordered out to join Medley.

As the land and sea forces of the allies advanced along the coast they invested and attacked all the fortified places held by the enemy. Savona, blockaded by a squadron of five ships<sup>3</sup> under Captain

<sup>1</sup> The squadron in Carthagená in 1746, according to Duro, consisted of the following ships: 'Real,' 114, 'Leon,' 70, 'Constante,' 60, 'America,' 60, 'San Fernando,' 60, 'Hercules,' 60, 'Oriente,' 60, 'Brillante,' 60, 'Soberbio,' 60, 'Neptuno,' 60, 'Alcon,' 52, 'Xavier,' 50, 'Retiro,' 50, 'Paloma,' 50, 'Galga,' 50, and 'Aurora,' 30—total 15 ships of 50 guns and upwards and one frigate. These took no part whatever in the campaign.

<sup>2</sup> Duke of Newcastle to Medley, December 12th, 1746. Byng did not sail till February 20th, 1747.

<sup>3</sup> 'Nassau,' 'Burford,' 'Revenge,' 'Diamond,' 'Phoenix.'

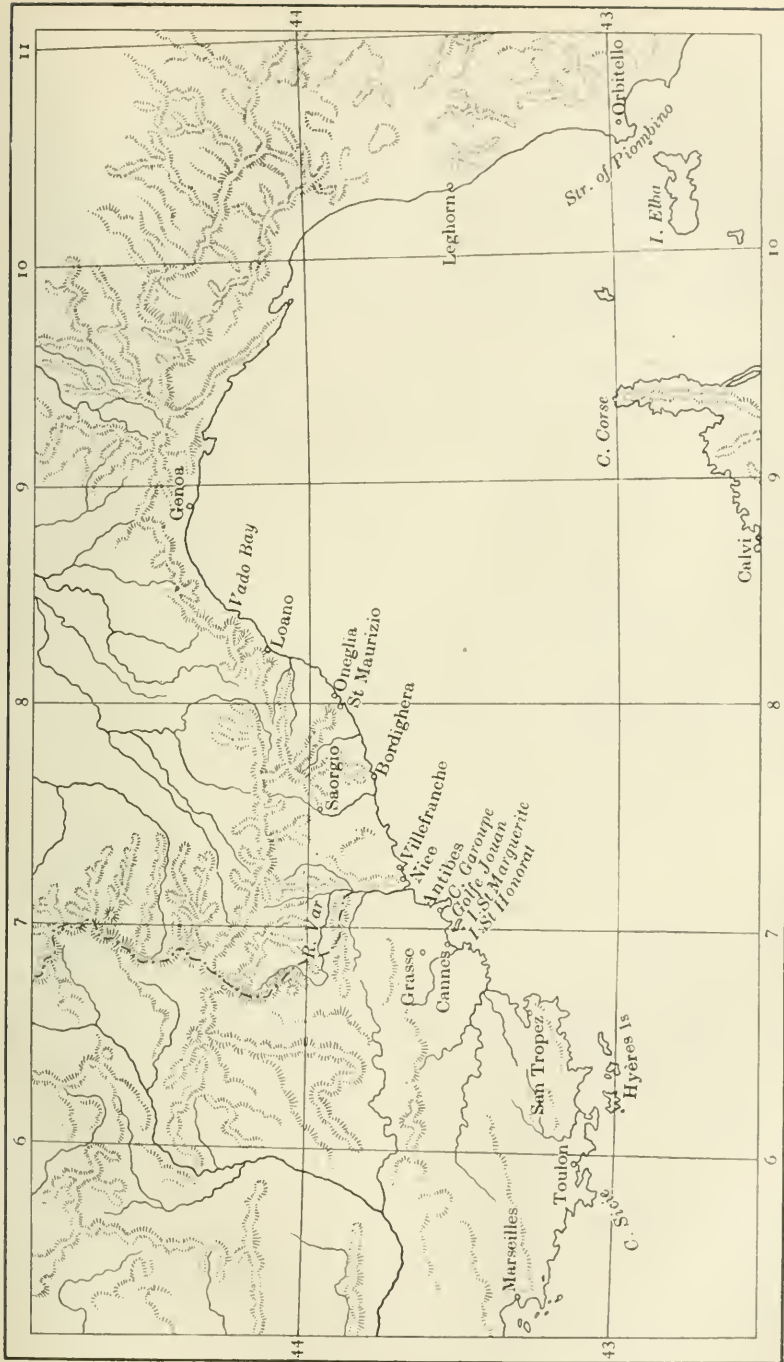
Strange and by a Piedmontese army surrendered just before a relief expedition of 12,000 Genoese arrived to raise the siege. The Hyères Islands were attacked jointly by land and sea. A battery of four 32-pounders landed from the 'Boyne' and 'Russell,' bombarded the defences from the mainland, while a bomb-vessel, anchored in the Golfe Jouan, threw shell into the castle from that direction. "The 'Carcass,' bomb vessel commanded by Captain Jermy," wrote Medley, "being placed with great judgment for bombarding the castle upon the island of St Marguerite, and the direction of the mortars so skilfully conducted by Lieutenant Haslop of the train, that there was scarce a shell fired without execution...the castle suffered so much in the bombardment that our boats had no sooner landed 500 Austrians than the French commander proposed a capitulation, which was agreed upon between him and General Brown<sup>1</sup>."

St Marguerite having surrendered, the 'Carcass' began next day to attack Antibes in the same manner, but the capture of the Hyères Islands was to prove the last success of the invasion, which was finally broken upon the works of Antibes. Although it was invested by land and bombarded from the sea, the town, held by a strong garrison under a brave and resolute Commander, M. de Sades, defied all the attempts of the allies to capture it. Its successful defence furnished the French with the much needed breathing space in which to reinforce their army in Provence.

The defenders of Antibes were able to hold out largely because of the besiegers' lack of battering cannon, which they were unable to bring up soon enough owing to a Genoese revolt, caused by the arbitrary conduct of the officers of the Austrian army in occupation of Genoa. Since September when the Austrians entered it, until November, the city had remained quiet. But on the 24th of that month, when some cannon were being brought through the streets, the Austrian officers thought fit to impress the townsfolk to do the haulage, using the whip largely upon their shoulders. A riot resulted, which developed into a rising of the whole population of the place, who arming themselves drove the troops wholesale out of the town, and subsequently resisted all efforts by land and pressure of blockade by sea to bring Genoa again under submission. This insurrection proved the turning point of the campaign. The consequent delay in the arrival of the siege train for Antibes made it necessary to detain troops to invest the town, and thus hindered the general advance until the French had procured sufficient reinforcements to resist it successfully.

The French had quickly observed the danger with which Toulon

<sup>1</sup> Medley. In letters, December 13th, 1746.



THE RIVIERA



was threatened by this irruption into Provence, and early in December measures were in progress for the defence of that important arsenal. Local levies were raised, works were thrown up, French troops were hurried south from Flanders and Spanish assistance brought up from Catalonia, and these arrived with such speed and in such numbers that by the early part of January it became plain to General Brown that the invasion had miscarried, and that a retreat would be necessary. He resolved, however, to attempt to make a stand at Grasse in the hopes that further reinforcements would reach him. The attempt was unavailing. On January 21st his position was attacked and carried by Marshal Belleisle's large army, and the Austrians after first falling back in a hurried retreat, then completely evacuated Provence.

The contributory action of the squadron in these operations covered a wide area and extended beyond such tactical assistance as was represented by the bombardments of Hyères, Antibes and Genoa. Its duties reached from Cadiz to the Adriatic, the most important of them being the surveillance of the enemy's squadrons of ships of the line at Carthage and Toulon. These numbered about 21 ships<sup>1</sup> of over 50 guns, as against 18 under Admiral Medley, of which six were of 50 guns. The fact that the Spanish troops were cooperating with the French in repelling the advance had made Medley as anxious as the Administration in London lest this cooperation should be extended to the fleets. He expected that a really serious effort would now be made to complete the crews of the Carthage squadron in order that it might join or be joined by the French at Toulon. After much thought upon the situation he considered that the proper distribution of the fleet would involve a division of his squadrons, and a return to the dispositions of the summer of 1746, with one strong force based on Gibraltar watching Carthage, and the other based on Mahon, watching Toulon. His reasoning was that in the undivided state of the British Mediterranean squadron, if the Carthage ships should put to sea he would be obliged to collect all his available ships to oppose them, whereby the coast of Italy would be left without a naval covering force to assist the army of the allies, "which," he observed, "is enjoined on me by the King and recommended me as the principal object of my proceedings." If he should take his fleet to Carthage in such a case, the Toulon squadron might come out and break up his whole line of small craft. The islands of St Marguerite and St Honorat would then be recaptured, the blockade of Genoa would be raised, supplies and reinforcements would reach the city, and the sea communication of the Austrian army, already sufficiently precarious

<sup>1</sup> Fifteen ships at Carthage and six at Toulon.

in the winter season, would be cut. If, on the other hand, he remained on the Italian coast, the Carthagea squadron might get to sea, and the disturbing effect of a fleet at sea of which the intentions and whereabouts were unknown had already been sufficiently felt in this war. These considerations caused Medley to recommend a division of his fleet, and at the same time to request a reinforcement which would put him in a position to carry out the proposed distribution. Byng's four ships, it is true, were coming, and on their arrival he would be able to make a weak beginning; but until then, his situation would be a difficult one.

Besides the observation of the main enemy squadrons the Admiral had to provide for the actual control of the sea-communications. There were frigates in Toulon which might escape into the Levant and attack the Smyrna trade, there was the coastwise traffic of supplies connected with the army to protect, the movements of the troops to assist and the intercommunication of the enemy's supplies to stop. This last covered much water. The Franco-Spanish army was being supplied at different times from Antibes, Barcelona, Majorca and Oran, and the watching of the ports of arrival and line of passage demanded a large number of small vessels. The Austrians in their turn were passing troops across the Adriatic from Trieste to Ancona and the Po, and receiving supplies from Sardinia; these needed protection from the attacks of small Neapolitan cruisers in the straits of Piombino. Dutch traders were assisting the enemy by slipping into Marseilles and Toulon with shipbuilding materials and provisions. They had to be intercepted, and the Admiral's difficulties were not lessened by the diplomatic situation which was thereby created, the Dutch loudly protesting against what they complained was an interference of their rights under the Treaty of 1674<sup>1</sup>—as indeed it was. The circumstances, however, were such that no measures were adequate except a complete stoppage of all supplies which could assist the enemy; and Medley gave orders for the seizure of everything, taking advantage of that clause in the Treaty which allowed such materials to be captured when destined to "towns or places, besieged, environed or invested, in French *Bloquées* or *Investées*." He then bought the cargoes himself and applied them to the service of the fleet and army, thus, as he put it, providing "a two-

<sup>1</sup> In this treaty freedom of navigation and commerce was not to be affected by any war, but was to extend to all commodities carried in peace, except contraband. "All provision which serves for the nourishment and sustenance of life; likewise all kinds of Cotton, Hemp, Flax and Pitch; and Ropes, Sails and Anchors; also Masts and Planks, Boards and Beams of what sort of wood soever and all other materials requisite for the building or repairing ships...shall be wholly reputed amongst free goods."



fold advantage for the common cause." This minimised friction. But it was not the Dutch only who were trading with the common enemy, and who strongly resented interference; Tuscan vessels were busy carrying corn to Marseilles, and the Emperor—our ally in whose behalf we were fighting—was complaining loudly in his capacity of Grand Duke of Tuscany at our interception of the "legitimate" Tuscan trade!

These various services required frigates and small craft in a great number of stations. They were needed at Gibraltar to keep an eye upon Cadiz and to protect trade in the Gut of Gibraltar; up the Adriatic to cover the Trieste-Ancona line; off Naples to stop the entry of supplies and reinforcements; off Genoa, Antibes, Barcelona, Majorca, Carthage, in the straits of Piombino, between Sardinia and the coast of Provence, along the coast accompanying the army and with the main squadron of ships of the line for the ordinary duties of scouting and reconnaissances. The actual number of frigates and light craft of every description available for these numerous stations and duties was 17<sup>1</sup>, out of which a certain number had always to be away repairing or refitting. In spite of the representations of Haddock, Mathews, Rowley and Medley himself, every one of whom had pointed out the imperative necessity of a large number of small craft in a campaign of the nature of that in the Mediterranean, the last-named Commander still found himself constantly short of the quantity he needed. Even of those 17 which he had, four were only small weak vessels bought locally to supplement his exiguous squadron. With such inadequate numbers a complete blockade of the coast was impossible, and troops and provisions were able to slip by. Thus, Mann was complaining from Florence that Spanish troops were being successfully brought into Naples, and the Government at home were writing in December, 1746, that eight battalions of foot and 800 horse had recently been reported to have gone from Villefranche to Naples, besides provisions and other stores. But for all these complaints the sea passage was a precarious one for the enemy, as was shewn when the 'Feversham' captured one out of a convoy of three transports, whose troops had been embarked at Ceuta three months before, but had been driven into San Tropez by our cruisers and there held up ever since; while others at Marseilles were similarly unable to sail for over two months. The British command of those seas, though not absolute, was very far from being ineffective.

<sup>1</sup> Made up thus:

Fireships ...	2	44-gun ships...	4	Bomb-vessels	2
Sloops ...	2	20- " " ...	3	Barcolongos ...	3
				Xebecque ...	1

Also two storeships.

When, owing to the reinforcements received by Belleisle, in January, 1747, the Austrian army was forced back to the eastward, General Brown was most particularly anxious that the Lerins Islands should be retained, in order that by their occupation the enemy might be prevented from forming magazines at Antibes, and also that they might serve as a base for the squadron operating against the enemy's coastal supplies. An Austrian garrison of 500 men was therefore left in the islands, and Medley furnished naval support in the shape of the 'Roebuck,' Captain Weller, two small vessels and two feluccas and a barcolongo, putting the ships immediately under the direction of General Brown, and giving the Commanders orders "to obey him in the execution of every practicable undertaking."

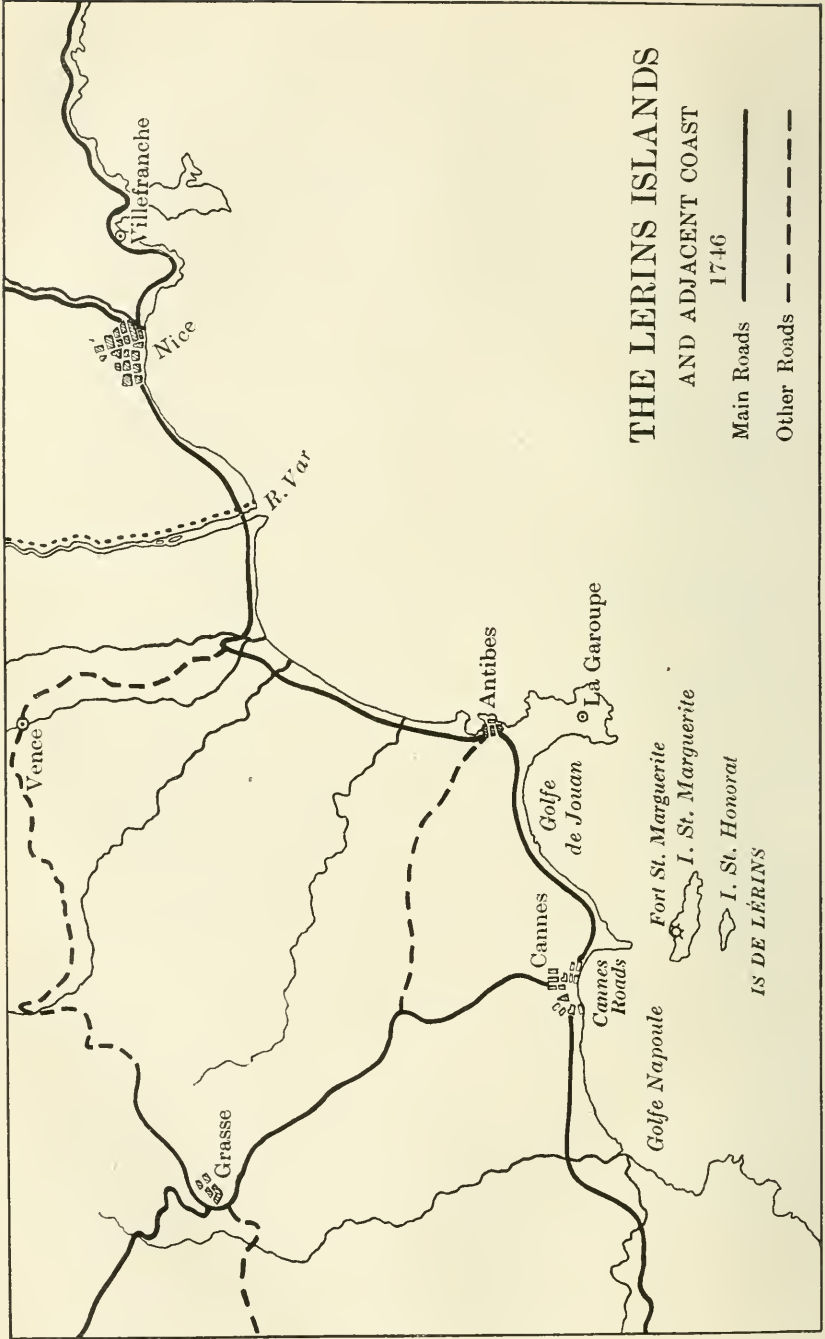
The Austrians fully intended to resume the attack upon Toulon and for this purpose another army under Count Schulemberg was preparing in February to move from Novi; while the blockade of Genoa was strictly maintained by the allies. Notwithstanding the protests of the Dutch, Medley continued to capture all neutral vessels bound to the Genoese coast and to detain their cargoes. Genoa needed men also for its defence, and in March, a part of the blockading squadron<sup>1</sup> discovered a convoy of about 40 troop transports which had sailed from Toulon. A few managed to slip into Genoa, but the remainder scattered, the majority making once more for Provençal ports which they reached in safety, with the exception of nine vessels; these, with 1847 officers and men were taken by the squadron, an action which drew an enthusiastic letter from Count Schulemberg in praise of the invaluable services which the British ships were rendering.

Schulemberg himself was not able to begin his advance for some time owing to the delays in assembling his army, its artillery, and its supplies, and of remaking the roads into a fit condition for traffic; this took time and could not be begun while they were heavily covered with snow in the early months of the year<sup>2</sup>. Belleisle, on the other hand, was able to continue his operations in the more open and lower country in which he was working. His first care was the recapture of the Lerins Islands. Coasting craft were collected in Cannes in large numbers under the protection of the batteries, and troops were got ready to move across the narrow strip of water as soon as a clear passage should offer itself. But the vigilance of Weller frustrated all attempts. In February not content only with cruising in the channel between the islands and the mainland, he sailed boldly in to try to destroy the vessels

<sup>1</sup> 'Antelope,' 'Leopard,' 'Revenge,' 'Feversham.'

<sup>2</sup> Schulemberg to Medley, March 26th, 1747. Written from Novi. S.P. Dom. Naval 97.





**THE LERINS ISLANDS**

AND ADJACENT COAST

1746

Main Roads ————

Other Roads - - - - -

Golfe Napoule

Fort St. Marguerite

I. St. Marguerite

I. St. Honorat

IS DE LERINS

Villefranche

Nice

R. Var

Antibes

La Garoupe

Golfe de Jouan

Cannes

Cannes Roads

Grasse

Vence

collected off Cannes. He warmly engaged the batteries, which gave him a good reception, hulling the 'Roebuck' many times and driving off the barcolongo in a sinking condition. But the ships silenced the batteries and cannonaded the transports with such effect as to render any immediate embarkation impossible. Medley promptly strengthened the squadron, fully appreciating the importance of holding the islands, and no further attacks took place<sup>1</sup>.

News was received in the end of March that the French ships in Toulon were making ready for sea. Expecting that this would mean an attack in force upon Weller's squadron, Medley, who had then fallen back to Vado Bay in order to get touch with the Austrians and support the blockade of Genoa, detached Admiral John Byng with a still further reinforcement of the 'Superbe,' 'Nonsuch' and 'Colchester.' For the time it looked as if the naval campaign were about to centre upon the possession of the islands.

Byng had arrived from England on April 17th. He met the Commander-in-Chief at Vado Bay and sailed a week later to take over the command at the Lerins Islands. His views of the situation as he found it furnish a curious side-light on his attitude in 1756 towards the question of relieving Minorca.

In Medley's instructions to Byng the preservation of the islands of St Marguerite and St Honorat was described as "essential to the advantage of the common cause," as by their situations they would be particularly useful in the scheme that was already formed for another irruption into the south of France. Byng thus went to his station fully aware of what was the object of his cruise, and of the military importance attached to the preservation of the islands. He reached the coast on April 25th. Two days later he was already sounding a note of despondency. He reports that a reconnaissance by Townshend shews that the whole of the Gulf of Napoule is fortified as far round as Cannes, with French galleys moored in the Gulf; that the enemy are very numerous both by sea and land; and that an attack upon the islands is imminent. He does not think he can do anything. "I am greatly afraid they will soon make themselves masters of these islands without having it in my power to prevent them...all I can do is to keep ships plying about the island." On May 6th he wrote that the island was untenable. The garrison, he was told, would be unable to hold out after the French should have landed. "There are many places in both islands where they may land in boats with great ease; and indeed I cannot flatter myself that I shall have it in my power to prevent

<sup>1</sup> The reinforcements consisted of 'Bedford,' 'Essex,' 'Revenge,' 'Dartmouth,' 'Diamond,' cruiser (settee).

them, but you may be assured that whatever means can be put in practice to do it shall not be left unexecuted by me." Three days later he repeats his inability to do anything. "In my opinion they may have that opportunity [viz., a favourable one to attack the islands] whenever they please without any interruption from our ships," and adds his view that the vast army assembling in the neighbourhoods must be intended for some big destination, such as crossing the Var, "which can never be prevented by our being in possession of these islands," whose fall, he adds "cannot be long depending." While his predecessor with a smaller force had kept the enemy on the defensive by attacking their craft wherever he could find them, Byng did nothing but cruise about the islands, usually, as his Journal shews, at a long distance from them. Notwithstanding the importance attached by the General to the retention of this position on the flank of the enemy in anticipation of a further advance, Byng finds a reason for not maintaining it. His tone throughout his correspondence is doleful, he sees nothing but difficulties, and is continually finding reasons for not doing that which he was specially ordered to do. In consequence, when his main squadron was driven to the eastward by a gale on May 15th, the French, whose preparations had been uninterrupted by him, crossed the strip of water and landed on St Marguerite; and the surrender of the island quickly resulted. It would be hard to find a more striking example of the effects of a purely defensive strategy devised and executed by a man with that type of temperament which sees lions in every path.

The capture of the island was followed, as Brown and Medley expected, by an advance of the enemy into Nice. The Austro-Sardinian army retreated to hold the passes between La Turbie and Ventimiglia. A council of war of naval and military officers was held at Sestri Ponente on June 11th to discuss further operations which decided to postpone the attempts to reduce Genoa and to divert the troops engaged upon its siege to delay the advance of the enemy, a small squadron under Captain Strange being ordered to cooperate with the army. Ventimiglia was still held, Strange's squadron having prevented the enemy from bringing battering cannon; and the blockade of Genoa was maintained by sea by Captain Cornish cutting off all supplies of men or food.

The hoped-for re-assumption of the offensive by the Austrians did not take place although preparation for it went on for some months. Heavy cannon and stores were brought down to Sestri Ponente ready for embarkation, transports were prepared, and the main body of the British squadron lay at Vado Bay ready to move with the army so

soon as an advance should begin. By the middle of June, however, it became evident that the French front was too strong to be broken, and Baron Leutrum, who now commanded, wrote to Medley on June 15th that his army, which had taken up a position stretching from the Col de Res to Port Maurizio, was standing on the defensive against an expected French advance. Medley therefore could do no more than remain at Vado, keeping the cannon embarked and awaiting the news of further developments from his military colleague.

A deadlock had now been reached, and the Admiralty realizing this and aware also of the unreadiness of the Carthagera squadron, judged it unnecessary any longer to maintain so large a British force in the Mediterranean especially as ships were now badly needed for operations elsewhere. Anson's success on May 3rd had shewn the benefit of a well-arranged system of cruising in the Bay; the circumstances leading up to it had also shewn how many ships were needed to keep the Western Squadron up to strength. At the same time the miscarriages in India, culminating in the loss of Madras, had resulted in strong pressure being brought upon the Government by the East India Company to send out a force to the East sufficient to restore our position and to drive the French out of India. The only place from which ships could be drawn at this juncture was the Mediterranean. Orders were therefore given in August to send home nine large vessels<sup>1</sup>.

Before he could execute this order Admiral Medley died of fever on August 5th on board the 'Boyne' off Savona. The command devolved upon Admiral Byng, who, since the loss of the Hyères Islands in May, had been employed cruising continually off Toulon, keeping an eye upon the harbour, partly with the object of covering the coastal operations, but also in order to deal with the French Levant convoys, one of which, a most valuable one, had been missed in February owing to a gale which drove off the squadron.

The tenour of Medley's instructions was outlined to Byng who now had the duty of carrying them out. He began by sending home as many as possible of the ships ordered, and was able to despatch half of them in September. The condition of the fleets in the Mediterranean when the whole detachment was made, left the British with 16 of the line<sup>2</sup>, including 50-gun ships, to oppose which the French had seven ships of from 80 to 64 guns, in good condition but not ready, at Toulon, and the Spaniards about 15 ships at Carthagera, of which only eight of from 70 to 60 guns were ready<sup>3</sup>. So far therefore as ships of

<sup>1</sup> Three of 80, two of 70, two of 60, one of 50, and one of 40.

<sup>2</sup> One of 80, six of 70, two of 60 and seven of 50.

<sup>3</sup> Byng to the Duke of Newcastle, September 15th, 1747.

force were concerned the situation was satisfactory; but there was still a lack of small craft, which, although the military operations on a grand scale were at a standstill, were nevertheless needed to prevent the passage of reinforcements and supplies which the enemy was still under the necessity of sending along the coast to the assistance of Genoa; the immediate result of this lack was that Byng, like Mathews, had to spread his ships of the line along the coast in answer to the urgent requests from the allied military Commanders to intercept the small bodies thus using the sea. The effect of this was that he had an insufficient squadron to keep Carthage under observation. Three Spanish ships were then able to leave that port and join the squadron in Cadiz—a comparatively unimportant movement in itself, but disquieting to those who were engaged in the operations in the Atlantic<sup>1</sup>. The need for small craft in these parts was however at last appreciated by the Admiralty, to which Anson had now returned, and Byng was ordered to make arrangements to provide ten or twelve, purchasing them locally, for the coastal services. The scattered condition of the squadron before these purchases were made will be seen from the following table of dispositions on October 5th:

At Vado Bay, keeping touch with Austro-Sardinian headquarters: 'Boyne' (flag), 'Burford,' 'Princessa.'

Cruising between C. Noli and off Genoa to intercept succours to Genoa: 'Revenge,' 'Superbe,' 'Conqueror.'

Between C. Delle Melle and Villefranche to intercept succours to Genoa: 'Guernsey,' 'Royal Oak,' 'Nonsuch.'

Between Calvi and Cape Corse to intercept troops from Antibes and Villefranche to Genoa: 'Liverpool,' 'Phoenix.'

Between Mallorca and Cape Corse to stop Genoese galleys with provisions from Leghorn to Genoa: 'Litchfield,' one zebeck, one bomb-vessel and a settee.

Off Toulon: 'Leopard.'

Between Sardinia and the Barbary Coast: 'Essex.'

Between Matapan and Candia: 'Roebuck,' 'Lowestoft.'

In Adriatic: 'Seaford.'

At Gibraltar to protect trade: 'Jersey,' two sloops, one zebeck.

At sea on various services: 'Nassau,' 'Antelope.'

At Leghorn, protecting provision convoys: one sloop, one fireship.

At Mahon, refitting: 'Dunkirk' (going home), 'Rupert,' 'Colchester,' 'Fever-sham,' 'Lynn.'

At Lisbon, for the services of Gibraltar and Mahon garrisons (bringing money, etc.): 'Dartmouth.'

At Orbitello covering Savona: 'Stirling Castle,' 'Chatham.'

The armies went into winter quarters in November, the French headquarters being at Villefranche and Nice; the Austrians wintered at Parma, whence they threatened the enemy's communications with the east. The British squadron remained cruising, dispersed, with slight

<sup>1</sup> The actual purpose for which these ships were destined was as escort to a Caraccas fleet—so intent were the Spaniards still upon using their fleet for defensive purposes.



variations in detail, as described above, and aiming at intercepting the supplies,—in particular, those of corn of which there was a great lack in Provence, Languedoc and Dauphiné—into France, and of reinforcements and stores of all kinds into Genoa. The French squadron at Toulon did nothing. Those ships which had been ready for the sea dropped back into ordinary, and no force now threatened the completeness of the local British command but the six remaining Spanish ships of the line at Carthagená. The pressure of the sea blockade produced its accustomed results. Unable to obtain corn by sea, the French invaded the Duchy of Massa, seizing Lorenza, in order to secure the provisions which were allowed into that state under cover of the Duchess of Massa's passes. This in its turn caused Byng to remind the Duchess that he would be obliged to stop the imports into the Duchy unless the French were ejected, or measures taken to prevent the corn falling into their hands—an action which, he observed, could not fail to cause the most serious distress in the state of Massa. Other neutrals were similarly assisting to supply the French, and protesting vigorously when their efforts were checked by the British squadron. Neapolitan vessels were running supplies and provisions to the French and Spanish armies under false bills of lading consigned to merchants at Lisbon and other ports. A case occurred of a Malta 64-gun ship covering the goods of French merchants to Marseilles; concerning which the Admiral remarked that he hoped that if he found it necessary to lay hands on Maltese ships-of-war engaging in this practice, he would be supported by the Government. The Dutch were continuing to run corn to Marseilles and making a great outcry when their ships were detained.

Thus while the armies kept their quarters in the winter, the fleet maintained its blockade without interference from those bodies of powerful ships which might have hampered it greatly from Toulon<sup>1</sup> and Carthagená. In February came news that six ships were being got ready at the French arsenal, of which three were to sail very soon, not however to disturb the British command but to escort a convoy, so it was reported, to the West Indies, possibly in conjunction with the Spanish force preparing at Cadiz. Byng was greatly exercised as to whether he should make a concentration off Toulon to deal with these ships if they came out, thus weakening his blockade, or maintain the blockade and let the ships go unmolested. He decided upon the latter, partly because at the time he received the intelligence he feared the

<sup>1</sup> The force at Toulon reported in January was: New ships: one of 80 and three of 64. Nearly ready: one of 74. Serviceable: one of 64, one of 60, two of 54, one of 36. In ordinary: two of 74, one of 64. There were only two frigates at sea, cruising in the Levant.

three ships would already be gone, but more because "his Grace the Duke of Newcastle recommended the affairs in Italy to me as the principal object of my attention, the service of which requires so many of the fleet to attend both the eastern and western Riviera of Genoa to prevent the attempts which the French and Spaniards will most naturally make this spring from all quarters to push in their troops and supplies for the relief of that place [Genoa], and in all probability to lay siege to recover Savona Castle which undoubtedly they will do if they find they possibly can; and nothing will prevent them making that attempt but my lying in Vado Bay with a sufficient strength to oppose it<sup>1</sup>." Thus, in order to execute the wishes of the Secretary of State, he felt obliged to neglect the port of Toulon and the French trade. While British ships of the line were doing the work of frigates, enemy ships of the line were permitted to come and go as they pleased; the enemy<sup>2</sup> were actually sailing from Toulon on the day he wrote his letter. Some ships under repair at Mahon hurried to sea to intercept them, and sighted them in the straits near Ceuta, but they got away clear.

Small in itself, this episode is not unimportant. The ships were not going, as was put about, to the West Indies, but were to join another division from Brest to sail for the East, in the hopes of there establishing a preponderance, and destroying the already shaken fabric of British trade and influence. In that part of the world there was an opportunity of redeeming some of the misfortunes to French commerce in the west, and the scheme was far from unpromising to French hopes. Two outside forces served to prevent its success—bad weather and the British East India Company. The former broke up the squadron and led to the capture of one of the Brest units, the latter had forced the British Admiralty to send a large naval force itself to the same area; the conjunction of these factors guarded our interests from the results which might have followed a non-observance of the established golden rule—that the enemy's ships of war are the first objectives of the British squadrons, and that their destruction is the means towards attaining all the other objects of sea war. In failing to abide by this rule Byng was less blamable than his employers. Emphasis had been laid, as he shewed in the above quoted letter, on the protection of Italy as his principal object; but the means of achieving this—small craft in abundance—had not been furnished. He was left to scour the Mediterranean himself in search of feluccas, zebecks, settees and other craft to cover his deficiencies, and in addition to the difficulty of securing

<sup>1</sup> Byng to Admiralty, February 13th, 1748. In letters.

<sup>2</sup> 'Conquérant,' 74, 'Content' or 'Fière,' 64, 'Oriflamme,' 54.

these he had then to man them from among the crews of his ships of the line.

Preparations for the spring campaign of 1748, which was to include an Austrian attack upon Spezia, an Austro-Sardinian attack upon Corsica, and a renewal of the advance against France, were still in preparation in April when the preliminary articles of peace were signed at Aix-le-Chapelle (April 19/30), by which an immediate suspension of arms in the Low Countries, Holland and Italy were agreed to. On May 11th orders were sent for a cessation of arms with France on land. Hostilities at sea were to be permitted for another six weeks, but no more movements took place after May 27th, when all operations ceased. On July 12th Byng was ordered to return home with his squadron leaving a small force of seven sail<sup>1</sup> under Admiral Forbes as the peace establishment for the Mediterranean station—a strength which varied little until the outbreak of the Seven Years' War.

<sup>1</sup> 'Superbe' 60, 'Litchfield' 50, 'Severne' 50, 'Lynn' 40, 'Crown' 40, 'Margate' 20, and 'Enterprise' 8.

## CHAPTER VII

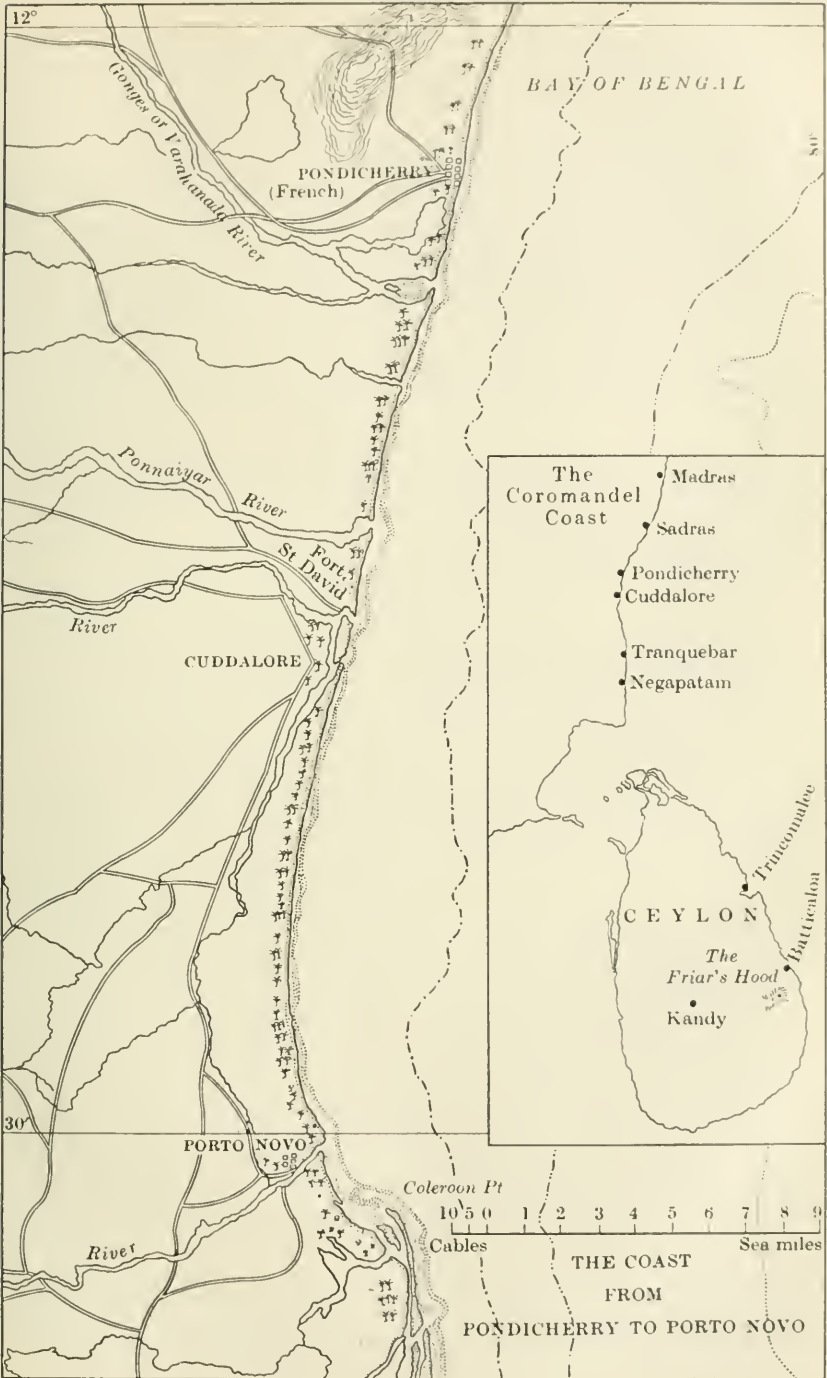
### THE WAR IN THE EAST INDIES 1744-48

THE campaign in the East Indies, although like all others dependent upon the disposition and success of the Western Squadron, did not influence the main strategy of the war. No allusion has therefore been made hitherto to the operations in that theatre except in so far as they were connected with those of the forces in the Bay of Biscay. Only in the closing years of the war were serious detachments of force made either by France or England; but trade attack and defence began at earlier stages.

While Spain remained England's only adversary the East Indian waters played no part in the war. The bulk of Spanish interests lay, with her possessions, further to the eastward in the China seas, where, as we have seen, an attack was made upon the Manila galleon by Anson in the 'Centurion.' When, however, France came into the war a new situation arose, for she had extensive and growing interests in India, side by side with those of Great Britain.

After many vicissitudes the French East India Company had at this time got a footing in India, principally on the Coromandel coast. Its agents were endeavouring to develop the resources and extend the influence of France in those parts in which settlements had been established. The Company, of which the first beginning had been made in 1604, had its headquarters at Pondicherry; subsidiary settlements had been made at Mahé, Chandernagore, Karikal and Calicut; a trade of fair dimensions had also been established with China. In 1715, by order of the Minister of Marine, possession had been taken of Mauritius, its importance as a station upon the route of India being recognised. When the war of the Austrian succession broke out in 1740 the establishments on the mainland of India formed one command and those in the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon formed another. A governor was appointed to each.

The two Governors in whose hands the fortunes of France in the East Indies reposed at this critical time were men of strong individuality. Dupleix, on the mainland, was a dreamer, a reader, a lover of art and a student of war. He had been in India since the age of eighteen and his knowledge of the East, combined with a power of imagination and a sweeping ambition unhampered by any undue scrupulousness,





rendered him a highly efficient instrument for developing the interests of France in the territories committed to his care. The Governor of the Islands, Mahé de la Bourdonnais, was a seaman, a native of St Malo. He had begun his career at the age of ten and had learnt the art and science of his profession at the hands of the finest of teachers, Experience, whose lessons were readily absorbed by the pupil owing to his intense desire for knowledge and his determination to acquire it. How great a driving force the combination of these two strongly marked and widely differing individualities would have made may be imagined; but acting in opposition instead of in harmony the clashing natures were to contribute not to the foundation of a French East Indian Empire but to the ruin of what had already been done towards its development.

After many years of successful maritime ventures in several capacities, La Bourdonnais had returned to France in 1734 with a great fortune and an even greater reputation which quickly brought him under the notice of de Maurepas. Through this Minister's good offices he was appointed to the Governorship of the two islands, whither he returned in 1735 to take up his duties.

Revisiting France in 1741 La Bourdonnais foresaw that the continental war then in progress must infallibly extend ultimately to France and England. He therefore suggested to the Minister that he should be given command of a squadron to attack British trade directly war was declared, after the hallowed custom of the mariners of his native port. The proposal was adopted. A squadron of two Royal and five East India ships<sup>1</sup> was placed under him and a commission given him—for he was not an officer of the Royal Navy—to command all the naval forces in Indian waters.

La Bourdonnais sailed from l'Orient on March 25th, 1741, carrying sealed orders, the contents of which he was not to read until war was declared. He arrived at Mauritius on August 14th, and after taking measures for putting the islands in a proper state of defence, sailed for Pondicherry. Thus the French were first in the field in the East Indies, and if war had then been declared, British trade must have suffered severely at the hands of this energetic corsair. The peace, however, still held, and a year went by without giving him any opportunity to use his squadron. The French East India Company proposed in 1742<sup>2</sup> that the principle of neutrality in those distant regions, which had been

<sup>1</sup> The Royal ships were 'Mars' and 'Griffon.' The East India ships, 'Fleury,' 'Brillant,' 'Aimable,' 'Renommée,' 'Parfaite.' The Royal ships were, however, withdrawn.

<sup>2</sup> The terms of the proposal are in the Hardwicke Papers. B.M. Add. MS. 35906.

admitted in the earlier war, might be observed in this one<sup>1</sup>; and acting on this hope they sent out an order in November, 1742, that La Bourdonnais was to send home his squadron lest it should provoke hostilities.

This weak and ill-considered order so disgusted La Bourdonnais that, at the same time as obeying it, he expressed his own feelings by sending in his resignation. This was not accepted. The justice of his estimation that a conflict with England was inevitable was shown by the arrival from France in September, 1744, of a frigate, 'la Fièvre,' with the news that war was declared. La Bourdonnais opened his sealed orders to find that they confined his operations to defence and expressly forbade him to attack any trading station belonging to Great Britain. Instructions of a similar tenour were sent to Dupleix, who was ordered to communicate with the British Governors and repeat to them the proposal of 1742 that neutrality should be observed between the companies in India.

While the hands of the French Commanders were thus being tied, the British Government was acting. Soon after war was declared in March, 1744, a squadron was fitted out for the purpose of trade attack and protection in the East Indies. This squadron consisted of three ships and a small frigate—the 'Deptford,' 60, wearing the broad pendant of Commodore Curtis Barnett, 'Preston,' 50, 'Medway,' 60, and 'Dolphin,' 20<sup>2</sup>.

Barnett was the officer who, in command of the 'Dragon,' had engaged the squadron under Caylus in the approaches to the Straits of Gibraltar. He was evidently known in the service as a man of considerable personality. His warm correspondence with Lestock on a tactical point shewed that he held his own views and was not afraid of expressing them. There is not much information available concerning him, but he appears to have been a close friend of Anson's and an advocate of the propagation of "sea-military knowledge."

While Barnett's squadron was being prepared by the Admiralty, the East India Company applied for letters of marque for several of their ships, some against France only, some for service against both

<sup>1</sup> A somewhat similar proposal was made in 1870 by the Commander of the 'Dupleix,' who arranged with the Commander of the 'Hertha' (these being the two ships in the Far East) that they should through their embassies in Yokohama propose to their respective Governments the neutralisation of Far Eastern waters. Germany consented, but France refused.

<sup>2</sup> "April 17, 1744. This day I received a commission for the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty appointing me Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's ships and vessels designed on a particular service and to take under my command the 'Deptford,' 'Medway,' 'Preston' and 'Dolphin,' with their Lordships instructions for my proceedings." Commodore Barnett's Journal.



France and Spain<sup>1</sup>. The ships of the East India Companies of England and France were capable of forming an important contribution to the naval forces; but while the British Company's vessels worked independently under letters of marque, those of the French formed the bulk of their regular squadrons. Barnett's instructions, which were drawn up by the Secret Committee of the East India Company, were to attack the French trade and protect that of the East India Company<sup>2</sup>. Special further instructions were sent him in December, 1744, directing him to cruise off Ceylon from the end of April to the beginning of June when French ships might be expected to be arriving from Europe, and, at the expiration of that time to go to Fort St David's and await further orders. He was provided with a set of private signals, arranged by the Secret Committee, for recognition between the Company's and the King's ships, both by day and night<sup>3</sup>.

The squadron got under way from St Helen's Road on April 30th and anchored at 9 A.M. on May 26th at Porto Praya where the permission of the Governor to fill up with water and refreshments was obtained. Two Spanish ships lay in the harbour, and Barnett learned from the Portuguese Governor that their Commander had taken two British vessels and burnt two others in the neutral anchorage of

<sup>1</sup> The following ships of the Company were granted letters of marque during this year:

January 14th, 1744			October 24th, 1744		
Ships	Guns	Enemy	Ships	Guns	Enemy
'Pelham'	30	} France and Spain	'Essex'	30	} France and Spain
'Prince of Orange'	30		'Lincoln'	30	
'Augusta'	28	} France only	'Dolphin'	20	} France only
'Walpole'	30		'Queen Caroline'	30	
'Princess Mary'	30		'Scarborough'	30	
			'Royal George'	30	
			'Kent'	30	
			'London'	28	

<sup>2</sup> This set of instructions is missing and their tenour can only be deduced from remarks in Barnett's letters.

<sup>3</sup> *By Day.*

Company's ships haul up mainsail, lower foretopsail, spread an English Ensign, cross downwards, at the foretopmast head.

King's ships' reply. Lower maintopsails, haul up foresails, hoist an English Ensign at the mizen peak.

*By Night.*

Company's ships. Two lights at an equal height at the mizen peak, and one in the fore shrouds.

King's ships' reply. Four lights at an equal height, two in the main and two in the mizen shrouds.

the Isle of May. The Commodore thereupon sent a message on shore to the effect that "as the Spaniards had violated the neutrality of Portugal at the Isle of May, I did not think myself obliged to observe any here, and had determined to take both the ships"<sup>1</sup>; and this he proceeded at once to do. On June 3rd he sailed, and did not make the land again until he anchored at St Augustine's Bay in Madagascar on August 26th<sup>2</sup>, by which time many of his crew were down with scurvy<sup>3</sup> and sickness; these he landed and placed in tents ashore to recover their health.

Having revictualled his ships with three months provisions of cattle and pork which he killed and salted down, he proceeded to St Paul's Island, where he arrived on October 8th. There he separated the squadron in two divisions for the attack of the homeward bound French trade from China, the 'Medway' and 'Dolphin' going to the Straits of Malacca, and the 'Deptford' and 'Preston' through the Straits of Sunda to Banca Strait.

Barnett cruised with his division for two months off Banca Island. He had news from a Dutch sloop from Palembang that a French 50-gun ship had been seen in those parts and he worked up and down the coast looking for her, and receiving much contradictory information about her. On the evening of January 24th, being then to the northward of Lucipara Island, he sighted three ships coming down before the wind towards him. He kept ahead of them during the night under easy sail. At 7 A.M. next day they were close to him with French colours abroad. Barnett, whose two ships were painted in disguise of merchant ships, hoisted Dutch colours and waited for them. The French, who were prepared for action, ran down towards him and when within musket shot opened fire; Barnett promptly hoisted his proper colours and a brisk action began. The Commodore's intention was to carry the ships by boarding "in order that their defence might be short and none escape me," but some lucky shots from the enemy cut the tiller ropes of both the British ships as they were bearing away to run alongside and temporarily disabled them. The damages were, however, quickly repaired and the three French ships were all taken in an hour and a half. They

<sup>1</sup> Two of the ships taken and burnt by the Spaniards were English owned; the other two were the 'Elizabeth' of New York and the 'Merrimac' of Marblehead. Barnett's Journal.

<sup>2</sup> When in the vicinity of Tristan da Cunha Barnett records that he found his charts very inaccurate, "finding an essential difference in the charts, being by the plain ones as much to the westward of Tristan da Cunha as by the Mercator to the Eastward." As he did not see the island where he might have expected to by the former charts he concludes: "Dr Halley's mercator chart to be the most correct and the plain ones very erroneous." Barnett's Journal.

<sup>3</sup> The 'Preston' had no less than 57 sick. Fourteen had died on the passage.

were the 'Dauphin,' 'Jason' and 'Hercule'; French ships of about 700 tons and 30 guns each, bound home from China with rich cargoes of tea, chinaware and silk. The British ships were little damaged below<sup>1</sup>, but their rigging and sails "suffered surprisingly in the time." The prizes were carried to Batavia and there sold to the Dutch for £92,000—a price far below their real value.

In February, 1745, Barnett was reinforced by the 'York,' 60, 'Stafford,' 50, and 'Lively,' 20; the 'Medway' and 'Dolphin' at the same time rejoined him bringing two prizes, the 'Favori,' 28, taken at Achin, and a Pondicherry ship from Manila. The 'Dolphin' being leaky and too weak to carry her guns, Barnett had the 'Favori' surveyed, and purchasing her from her captors for £8000 added her to the squadron under the name of 'Medway's Prize,' with a new armament which gave her 40 guns; at the same time he transformed the 'Dolphin' into a hospital ship.

The 'Lively' brought out a letter from Lord Winchelsea authorising Barnett to endeavour to intercept the Acapulco ship at Manila. Anson had arrived home in June, 1744, and his successful capture of the galleon in 1743 suggested that the operation might be repeated annually, the 'Lively' was therefore sent out, bringing for Barnett's use the information collected by Anson about the pilotage in the China seas. The Commodore had, however, letters from Madras informing him that the French were making great preparations at Mauritius and would soon arrive on the coast in strength, when the British settlements would be in danger. He therefore did not take advantage of the opportunity offered to him of earning a fortune in prize money, but returned to the station off Ceylon in which he had been originally directed to cruise, and where he had been ordered to meet some out-coming men-of-war and East India ships which were due to arrive in June.

Sailing from Batavia on April 28th, Barnett made the coast of Ceylon on June 1st and five days later anchored off the Dutch settlement of Batticaloa. Here, while he watered and provisioned, he learned from the Governor that four French ships, apparently men-of-war, had passed to the northward some three weeks earlier. This news gave him some food for thought. The outward bound British ships might now arrive at any moment and would expect to be met off the Friar's Hood by the squadron; his instructions were clear that he was to meet them there and to escort them in safety to the northward, and the decision he had to make was whether he would best ensure their protection by proceeding at once in pursuit of the four ships of which

<sup>1</sup> 'Deptford,' 7 killed, 14 wounded; 'Preston,' 3 killed, 3 wounded.

the Dutch Governor had given him information, or by waiting in the station in which he was directed to meet them. He decided to do the latter; the ships were already overdue, the delay of a day or two would make little difference in pursuing a squadron which had three weeks' start, the whereabouts of which was unknown, and which might, if he should vacate his rendezvous, return to it in his absence and capture the outward bound ships on their arrival. He therefore put to sea as soon as he was ready and cruised off the Friar's Hood, constantly exercising the ship's companies at the great guns and the squadron in forming line of battle and manœuvring. His assiduity in this direction is no less noticeable than that of Anson when he took command in home waters.

For over a month Barnett cruised, looking out for the ships, and as the time passed he became daily more uneasy for the security of the settlements and the trade on the Coromandel coast. On July 19th, feeling that in view of his information about the four French ships he ought to wait no longer for the arrival of the trade from Europe, he went to Negapatam for intelligence, Governor Morse of Madras having informed him that he would send any information to that port to meet him. There he received a joint letter from the Governors of Madras and Fort St David's in which they expressed their opinion that a station between Negapatam and Pondicherry would be a more proper one for the protection of trade than off the Friar's Hood. As his instructions ordered him always to consult with the Governors and act in conjunction with them, he bore away to the northward and took up a station off Negapatam, and there cruised with the squadron spread in a broad front, the ships a league apart by day and a mile by night.

In August, having still seen nothing of the reported French squadron, the Commodore went to Madras, where he anchored on the 11th of the month. Here, although war had been in progress for well over a year he found a lack of preparation which gave him a gloomy apprehension of what would happen if the place were ever attacked. Writing to Anson he said that a slight increase in the Pondicherry garrison would enable the French to capture Madras and St David's as well, unless there were a sufficient sea force to prevent the expedition being made. The Directors were fortifying the place, to be sure, and by the time the war came to an end it might be put in tolerable order. "True old English management," he wrote, "the Directors copy the Court and never guard against a war till it is declared and of course too late to be properly provided<sup>1</sup>." The garrison of Madras consisted of about 350

<sup>1</sup> Anson Correspondence, B.M. Add. MS. 15955.

men, "in no proper state of discipline," according to one observer on board the squadron<sup>1</sup>. Anxious to save their pockets, the Company did as little as they could to protect themselves. Nearly two years later, after they had lost Madras largely through their own parsimony, they still had done so little to improve the defences of their remaining establishments that the naval Commander-in-Chief wrote: "What a scandalous condition are all our Factorys in, for Forts I cannot call them being only high enclosures, and their soldiers mostly black faces, Dutch runagadoes and rather names than men<sup>2</sup>."

Barnett, however, was powerless to influence the Company's affairs on land and could only do his best to defend its interests at sea. He studied with care the course of the East India Company's shipping in the immediate future, and the Governor of Madras having suggested that a ship or two cruising off Point Palmiras in the mouth of the Ganges would contribute to the security of British trade, Barnett sent Lord Northesk in the 'Preston,' with the 'Lively' under his orders, to cruise there; keeping the rest of the squadron on the Coromandel coast, about Porto Novo, to cut up French trade. The whole of his movements were directed by the advice of the Governor of Madras, to whom Barnett wrote asking for his views, and in close cooperation with whom he worked. In September he asked the Governor's opinion as to how the ships could best be employed for the Company's service when it should be no longer possible, owing to the breaking of the monsoon, to remain on the coast, and being advised that Mergui or Achin would then be the most advantageous station, he sailed to the former port on September 27th. Here the 'Preston' and 'Lively' rejoined him from the Ganges. They had taken all the French merchantmen bound for that part<sup>3</sup>. The 'Preston' was sent back to the Ganges to continue her fortunate cruising, the 'Medway' was sent to cruise in the Straits of Malacca; but Barnett, still anxious for news of the long expected East Indiamen, learning from a Danish ship from Achin that no English vessels had yet arrived there, determined to return at once to Madras, whither he expected they must have gone. He reached Madras on

<sup>1</sup> *A narrative of the Transactions of the British squadron in the East Indies.*

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Griffin to Admiral Anson. B.M. Add. MS. 15955 f. 288. Calcutta was in a similar condition only ten years later (1756) "The ruinous state of the lines to the Westward of the Fort had been a reproach to our settlement, and to everything bearing the name of fortification, for more than two years. The whole Easterly curtain had been for many years in so ruinous a condition as not to bear a gun...etc."... "No cartridges of any kind ready. The small quantity of grape in store had lye[n] by so long that it was destroyed by worms. No shells fitted nor Fuzes prepared...etc." Sir G. Forrest, *Life of Lord Clive*, vol. 1. pp. 295-297.

<sup>3</sup> 'Heureux,' 600 tons, 18 guns; 'Chandernagore,' 650 tons, 18 guns; 'Dupleix,' 380 tons, 12 guns.

December 17th, and found his surmise correct—the ‘Harwich,’ ‘Winchester’ and five East Indiamen were at anchor in the Road<sup>1</sup>.

Governor Morse had plenty of news to give the Commodore. Three or four French ships had sailed from China for Pondicherry, and it was reported that preparations were being made at the French settlement to attack Cuddalore. To deal with these movements Barnett sent the ‘Winchester’ to reinforce the ‘Medway’ in the Malacca Straits and the ‘Deptford’ to protect Fort St David’s, shifting his broad pendant on board the ‘Harwich.’ About three weeks later he heard that the French ships were expected daily and fearing lest they should have evaded his detachment in the Straits of Malacca the Commodore at once recalled the ‘Deptford’ and weighed next day to cruise off Pondicherry with such strength as he could collect<sup>2</sup>. He had an overwhelming force with which to meet the expected Frenchmen, and when shortly after his arrival he was rejoined by the ‘Medway’<sup>3</sup> and ‘Lively,’ he detached the ‘Deptford’ and ‘Dolphin’ to carry the homeward bound trade<sup>4</sup> to Europe. This sailed on February 5th, but before it went the ships took part in a small demonstration off Pondicherry. When Barnett arrived off the French settlement on January 28th, he found the expected attack on Cuddalore actually in progress. A letter reached him from the Governor of Fort St David’s saying that the enemy had marched out of Pondicherry with about 1000 men, of whom 400 were Europeans, and some guns, and was now within a mile of the walls of the Fort. In view of the expected arrival of the French ships from China, Barnett interpreted this attack as a ruse to draw his squadron away from Pondicherry to open the port for them, and he only sent the ‘Dolphin’ to anchor close in off Fort St David’s, directing her Captain to signal to him if he were under any apprehensions. To “amuse” the enemy in his turn Barnett pretended to make an attack on the French town and sent all his boats away as if he intended to make a descent. The French took the alarm, hastily decamped from before Cuddalore and returned by forced marches to the defence of their town.

The expected French ships did not appear, and by the end of February it was too late for them to come from China, and too early for any to arrive from Europe; Barnett accordingly felt that there was no object in his remaining on the coast where no service was to be done. His

<sup>1</sup> They had sailed from England April 15, 1745. Captain’s Journal ‘Winchester.’

<sup>2</sup> ‘Deptford,’ ‘Harwich,’ ‘Preston’ and ‘Dolphin.’

<sup>3</sup> The ‘Winchester,’ which had reinforced ‘Medway,’ parted company and went to Bombay.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Wager,’ ‘Lincoln,’ ‘Hardwicke,’ ‘Queen Caroline,’ ‘Edgbaston,’ and ‘Vernon,’ East India Company ships; they arrived on August 25th, 1746, having been the object of some anxiety.

instructions directed him to cruise off Ceylon, so he proposed to go thither, leaving the 'Lively' to cruise off Porto Novo, or further south, and keep a good look out in case any ships of the enemy should arrive, when she was to bring the Commodore the news. There was, however, a report that some French ships were to have sailed from l'Orient in the preceding May<sup>1</sup>. It was therefore possible they might arrive in India, probably at Pondicherry, at any time, and Governor Morse represented to Barnett the dangers to which the coast would be exposed if they should appear in the absence of the squadron. The Company, he said, could not have thought the cruise off Ceylon absolutely necessary, nor would they have desired it to be made, if they had appreciated the consequent dangers to the unprotected coast. Barnett thereupon called a council of war which reviewed the situation. Having taken all the circumstances into consideration the council decided that "the continuance of the squadron on this coast was likely to prove most essential to the Company's true interests." The council was further of opinion that this was one of the occasions in which the circumstances were clearly different from those contemplated by the givers of the instructions, and that in consequence they were justified in departing from those instructions. Barnett, indeed, at about this time, wrote to the Admiralty pointing out that his instructions were of too detailed a nature, and tended to act as a restraint on his actions.

The Admiralty recognised the justice of the complaint, and informed his successor<sup>2</sup> that he was not to look on any plan of orders as "so strict and peremptory" as to prevent him from pursuing or disabling the enemy when the circumstances should appear to him practicable, as it was impossible for any scheme to be framed in London which should suit all occasions. "Their Lordships confide in your prudence," they said, "when any cases occur unprovided for in your instructions of doing better service upon the enemy than is contained in those instructions, and that the same can be performed without prejudice to the essential service of protecting the Company's trade and settlements, which is to be your principal object and attention<sup>3</sup>."

Throughout March Barnett remained on the coast. A rumour that

<sup>1</sup> The ships actually sailed in April, 1745.

<sup>2</sup> Out letters, November 18th, 1746. Secretary of Admiralty to Commodore Griffin.

<sup>3</sup> This may be compared with Cromwell's instructions to Blake and Montague of August 28th, 1656, a squadron of 20 ships, under Blake, was being sent off Cadiz to stop Spanish and protect British trade. Cromwell did not try to define in particular all the duties he expected to be performed. "But our intention is not to reckon up every particular wherein this fleet may be useful, but only to let you know our general scope; and to leave the management and improvements thereof to the prudence and direction of him who is to abide upon the place."

five French men-of-war had arrived at Calicut made him anxious to go off Ceylon for the safety of some early British East Indiamen that were expected; but the fears expressed by Morse for the security of the settlements appear to have prevented him from leaving this part of the station. While agreeing to remain there he did not content himself with passive cruising. A French vessel in Tranquebar Road which opened fire on one of his ships, notwithstanding the neutral anchorage, was promptly driven ashore and bilged; and another was burnt in Karikal Road by Lord Northesk; but still by the end of April no more had been heard of the reported French squadron from Europe.

On the 25th of April, being in a very bad state of health, Barnett sent his ships to cruise without him. He shifted his pendant on board the 'Lively' and himself went ashore. In three days his sufferings were over; on the evening of the 29th he died.

The death of Barnett was in every way a calamity. The services of an officer of determination and brilliant promise were lost to the nation, and the squadron itself was deprived of its Commander at the moment when he was most needed. For two years he had had no opportunity of distinguishing himself otherwise than by the care with which he carried out the essential, if prosaic and dull, duties attached to the protection of trade. He had drilled and prepared his squadron, but no enemy had come into the Indian seas to give him an opportunity of proving his powers of leadership. Now, at the moment of his death, the occasion for which he had waited was about to arise, and a commander well worthy to be measured against him was sailing from Madagascar with a fixed determination to bring matters to an issue in an action at sea. The command of the squadron passed to the next senior officer, Captain Edward Peyton. His adversary was to be La Bourdonnais himself.

While the British squadron had been spreading destruction to French trade and undermining French influence in India, La Bourdonnais lay at Mauritius endeavouring to fit out a force to put a stop to its depredations, in place of that which he had been obliged to send back to France. The news that war was declared reached the French Commander in September, 1744. In January, 1745, the council at Pondicherry wrote and informed him of the capture by the 'Medway' and 'Dolphin' of the 'Favori' at Achin, and expressed the hope that he would be able to arm some ships wherewith to protect French commerce on the coast of India. The letter reached La Bourdonnais in the beginning of April. It found him already doing all that lay in his power to dispute the command of the Eastern seas, by stopping the Company's ships as they arrived and arming them, in spite of the intimation from his Directors in Paris that trade would continue as



usual, and of the protests of the Commanders of the vessels, who, not being officers of the Crown, objected to the employment in war of themselves or their ships. The stores at his disposal were very meagre, he had very few artificers, and his work was hampered by the difficulties put in his way by the recalcitrant Captains. But for La Bourdonnais, as for Pitt, difficulties existed only to be surmounted. As the ships came in he set to work upon them, and before long he had a squadron in process of formation—so far as *matériel* alone goes towards making a squadron—consisting of the Company's ships, 'Neptune,' 36, 'Bourbon,' 42, 'Insulaire,' 30, 'Renommée,' 28, 'Elisabeth,' 30, and 'Surate,' the latter a small vessel for use as a scout. By means of these makeshifts and of ships expected from France, he hoped to be able to carry the outward bound trade in security to Pondicherry, and to protect the homeward bound trade from India and China as far as Mauritius.

This improvised squadron was ready to sail in July, 1745, but the reinforcements he had been told to expect had not yet arrived. Every day that passed made matters more critical, as on account of the breaking of the monsoon, September was the latest month in which ships could remain on the Coromandel coast; and, in addition, his crews were consuming their provisions, which could not be replaced in the islands. To relieve the strain on the local resources La Bourdonnais decided to send the whole squadron, except his own ship, to Madagascar to await the arrival of the reinforcements from France. Without the additional ships his force was far too weak to meet the British squadron, and when September arrived without any sign of the hoped-for help, he recalled the ships from Madagascar and sent them to Bourbon to get what provisions they could.

It was not until January, 1746, nearly two years after the declaration of war, that the first ship from France arrived. The remainder followed during February<sup>1</sup>, and La Bourdonnais decided to sail during March after the change of the monsoon. He had yet to discharge the cargoes of these outcoming ships and to fit the ships themselves as fighting vessels, for they arrived in no state to take their place in the line. The voyage from France had lasted ten months and the crews needed time to recuperate. To add to the Commander's difficulties, the victuals had been nearly exhausted in the long passage out, and the officers of the newly arrived ships, like their predecessors, grumbled at the warlike service on which they found themselves about to embark.

Provisions were not to be had in the islands, and the only thing to

<sup>1</sup> The ships were the 'Achille,' 70; 'St Louis,' 36; 'Lys,' 36; 'Phénix,' 38; 'Duc d'Orleans,' 36.

do was to sail as soon as possible and revictual in India. By re-adjusting his supplies La Bourdonnais was able to arrange that each ship had about 72 days victuals on board. Though this short allowance would preclude any possibility of an extended cruise on the coast of India against British trade, the French Commander hoped to succeed in surprising the British squadron, which, not expecting the arrival of such a force, might be cruising separately and so be open to attack in detail. Then, with the command of the sea in his hands he would be free to provision, spread his ships and cruise on the routes of the British trade.

The French squadron left Mauritius on the 24th March and arrived at Foul Point, Madagascar, on the 4th April. That day a violent storm arose and scattered the ships, causing widespread damage below and aloft. La Bourdonnais succeeded in collecting the squadron together in his rendezvous, Antongil Bay, and in that uninhabited region proceeded to refit his ships. To do this he had to cut down trees in the forest for spars, make roads on which to transport them, set up forges for his iron work and establish a dockyard in miniature for the repairs. The task in that climate must have been a stupendous one. All the time it was in progress his scanty stock of provisions was being consumed; 58 of his men, among them the majority of his carpenters, died of fever. But night and day the Commander superintended the work, encouraging the zealous, forcing the laggards, and setting a constant, noble example of zeal and energy.

By the 15th May his ships were refitted and he sailed for Mahé. Here he heard that the British squadron under Peyton was on the look-out for him. He left for the Coromandel coast, informing his Captains that he intended to fight Peyton, hoping, if he had the wind, to be able to succeed by boarding, thereby neutralising the weakness of his artillery and making use of his greater numbers of men.

Captain Edward Peyton, to whom the command fell after Barnett's death, was a man of different calibre from his predecessor. He has been a target for scorn of a succession of chroniclers<sup>1</sup>; but their verdict cannot be considered as fully balanced since Peyton never had the opportunity of speaking in his own defence.

Peyton commanded the 'Medway,' which for some months had been in so leaky a condition that she was making 32 inches of water an hour. While the 'Winchester' was absent at Bombay refitting, his predecessor had been unable to weaken the squadron any further in order to allow the 'Medway' to be hove down, in consequence of the

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Charnock who, as Sir John Laughton tells us in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, represents the opinion of Admiral John Forbes.

continued expectation of the arrival of the French squadron from the islands upon the coast. On May 23rd the 'Winchester' arrived; the leak in the 'Medway' had now increased to 30 inches in half an hour and was so serious that after a few days Peyton called a council of war to decide what should be done. If she were sent away by herself the squadron would be so reduced<sup>1</sup> that it would be incapable of standing up to the French, and the question for decision was whether it would be better to let the 'Medway' go alone, or to carry the whole squadron away in one body, or whether all should remain upon the Coromandel coast. It was unanimously resolved that the 'Medway' ought to proceed directly to some port where she could be careened and that it was not safe that she should go alone or that the squadron should be separated, "as we neither knew the number or strength of the enemy expected<sup>2</sup>." In accordance with this decision, Peyton told the Governor of Fort St George on June 4th that he was unable to remain on the coast, and intended to go to Trincomalee to refit, that being the nearest convenient port. He therefore sailed thither with his squadron on June 9th.

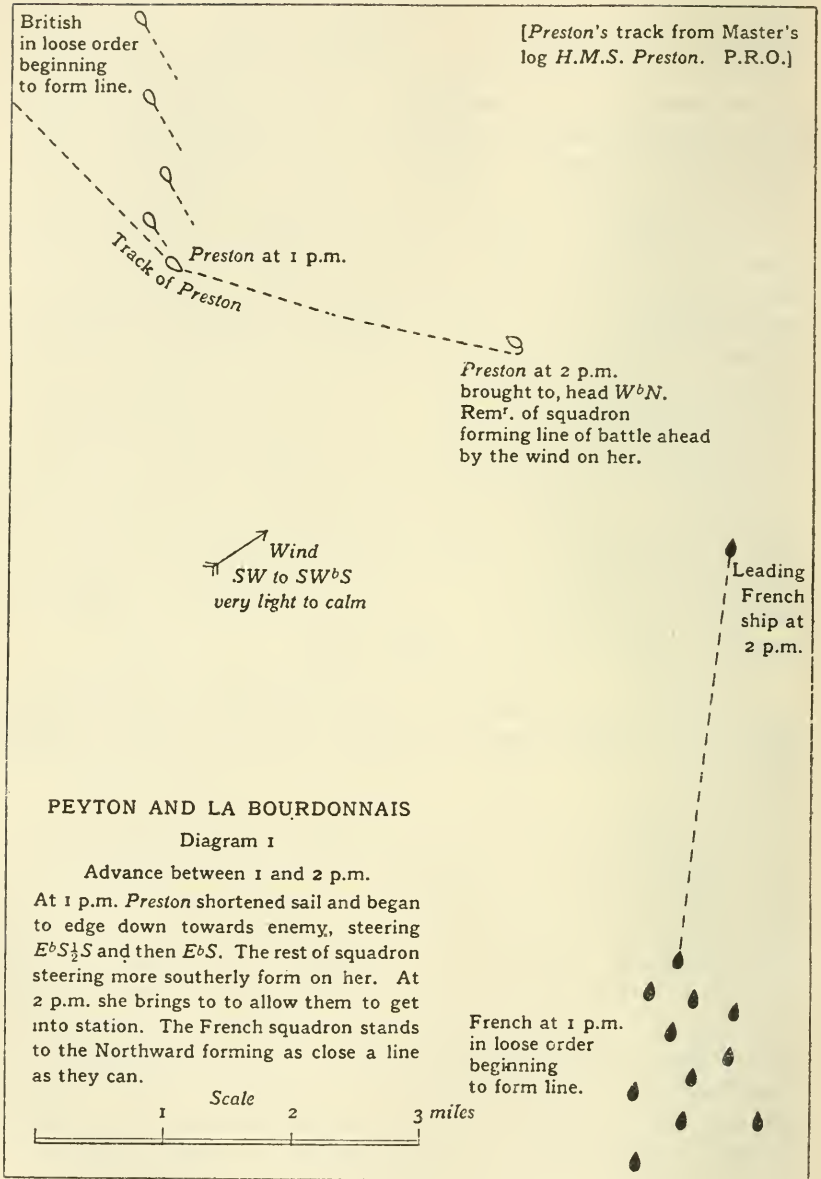
Strong off-shore gales prevented the squadron from getting into Trincomalee. The 'Preston' lost her bowsprit and other damage was done, and on the 17th Peyton put into Negapatam to make good defects. The 'Preston's' bowsprit was fished, the 'Medway' was pumped out as far as possible, and by the 24th of the month the squadron was ready to resume its journey to Trincomalee.

At daylight next morning, June 25th, ten sail were sighted to the S.E. Peyton at once weighed, and with the wind at S.W. stood down towards the strangers, clearing for action and forming the line of battle as he went. It was La Bourdonnais's squadron arriving at last upon the coast.

La Bourdonnais, who was in loose order, began forming up his ships in a line of battle to the northward. His intention, as before stated, was to endeavour to board; and so soon as he had formed his line, which was between 2 and 3 P.M., he hauled his wind and brought to. In the meantime Peyton coming down with a light S.W. wind about a point free was able to ensure having the wind of the French squadron, nor indeed, in spite of statements to the contrary, does it appear that La Bourdonnais made any effort to gain the wind as he might have done. The breeze, which nearly died away in the early afternoon, was nevertheless sufficient to give the ships steerage way, and at 1 P.M. the 'Preston,' which led the British line, bore up and began to edge down

<sup>1</sup> The 'Deptford' had sailed for England before Barnett's death, taking the homeward bound trade under her convoy.

<sup>2</sup> Peyton to Secretary of Admiralty, November 28th, 1746. Captain's Letters.



towards the enemy, bringing the wind from her starboard to her port side. She was followed on the port tack by the remainder of the squadron. Observers in the British ships were now able to distinguish what they had to deal with<sup>1</sup>. Lord Northesk in the 'Preston' not inaccurately made them out to be eight ships of about 30 guns each, with a 64- or a 70-gun ship flying the Commodore's pendant in the centre<sup>2</sup>.

Nothing is said in any of the letters or despatches to shew that Peyton made any attempt to put the individual superiority of his ships to any tactical use. The British were better fighting ships than the French, with the exception of the 'Achille.' They carried heavier guns, were of thicker scantling and were commanded by officers more practised in sailing and working in company. Possibly the heavy sailing of the leaky 'Medway,' both of whose pumps had to be kept going throughout the action, was a preoccupation to Peyton, but he does not specifically refer to it in his Journal or in his despatch. La Bourdonnais on the other hand explicitly stated in his letter to Duplex that he found the British ships both faster and better handled than his own. It would therefore seem that it might have been within Peyton's power to bring a most effective concentration of force upon a portion of the enemy's line, but in the very light wind which prevailed it may not have been possible. Be this as it may, he did not do so; but when the breeze freshened at about 4 P.M. he gave the order

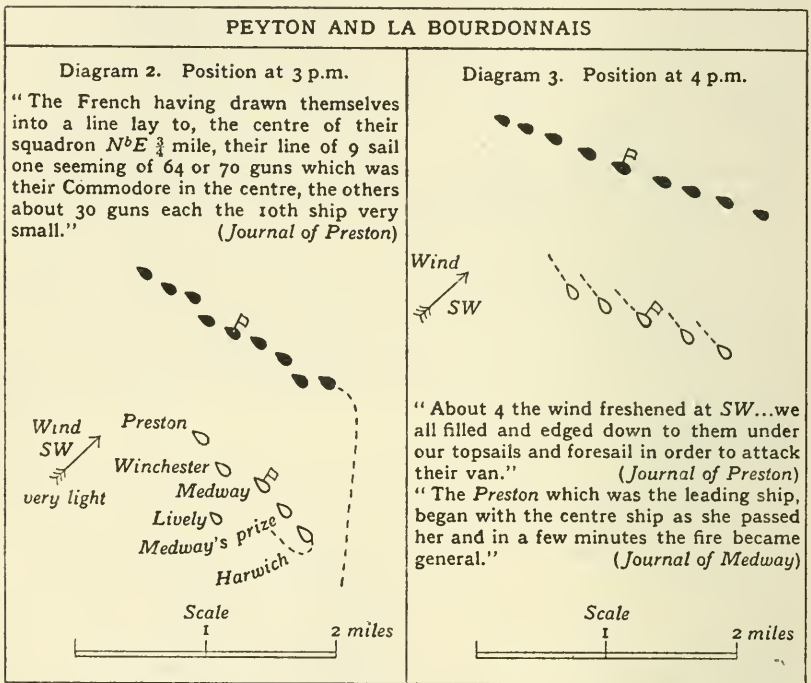
<sup>1</sup> The squadrons were as follows:

English		French	
Ships	Guns	Ships	Guns
'Preston'	50	'Bourbon'	34
'Winchester'	50	'Phénix'	38
'Medway'	60	'Neptune'	30
'Medway's Prize'	40	'St Louis'	36
'Harwich'	50	'Achille'	70
'Lively'	20 (not in the line)	'Lys'	36
		'Duc d'Orleans'	36
		'Insulaire'	30
		'Renommée'	28
		Also one small tender not in the line, guns unknown	338 and 3300 men
	270 and 1340 men		

The English ships in the order of battle. The French line not known, except that 'Achille' was in the centre; the guns for the French squadron as given in *Mémoire pour le Sieur de la Bourdonnais*, vol. II. 1751. English crews from Peyton's despatch of state and condition of squadron.

<sup>2</sup> Journal of Lord Northesk, H.M.S. 'Preston.'

to lead large, and his ships spread themselves along the French line. The 'Preston,' first passing the centre and exchanging shots with the 'Achille,' stood on along the line to the van and engaged the two leading ships; the 'Winchester' following her took the next astern; the 'Medway's Prize' and 'Harwich,' which brought up the rear, both began with the rear French ship and subsequently passed down the French line, receiving the fire of several of the enemy's ships simultaneously as La Bourdonnais locked up his line as closely as he could for mutual support.



Neither in Peyton's despatch nor in any of the Captains' Journals or Masters' Logs is there any reference to the range at which the squadrons engaged, but an unofficial account<sup>1</sup> put it at musket shot, while La Bourdonnais mentions that the English maintained a long range and so prevented him from boarding as he had intended. It may, however, be observed that when the squadrons first came in sight of one another neither had the advantage of the wind, and if the French Commander had been so anxious to board, he would have better ensured his purpose by hauling his wind at once and keeping by the wind all the forenoon. It would seem that Peyton, seeing the French ships crowded with men

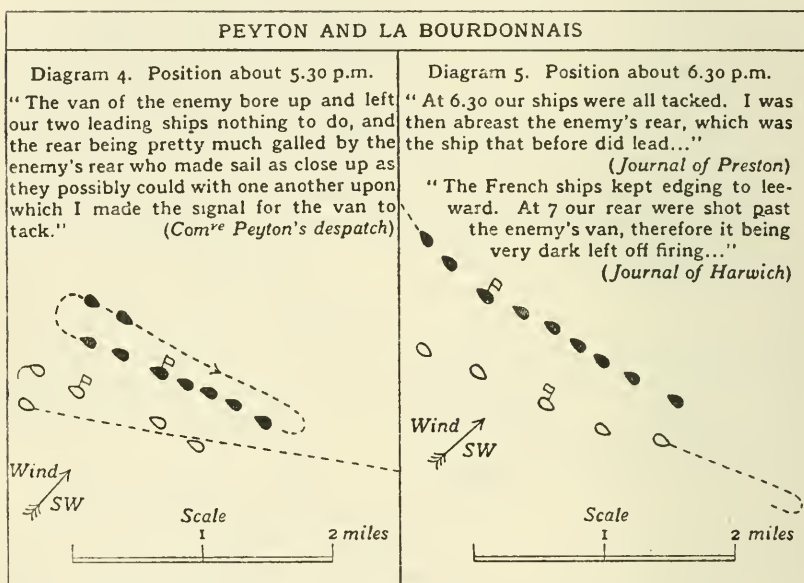
<sup>1</sup> A narrative of the transactions of the British squadrons in the East Indies.

and knowing his own to be very short handed, engaged outside point blank of a set intention both to make use of the advantage which his heavier artillery and his thicker sides gave him at the longer range, and to avoid the chances of damage aloft which might disable his ships and expose them to the danger of being boarded by the more numerous manned French. Whether this were so or not cannot be said, since Peyton has left no record of his intentions. Judging purely by results it would appear that he complied with the tactical formula of the time and engaged van with van and rear with rear. It is tempting to consider whether it would have been possible for him to apply the doctrine of economy of force, by concentrating the whole of his squadron either upon the van or the rear of the enemy. If there were a sufficiently dependable working breeze in which his ships could be handled confidently without danger of being becalmed or thrown into an awkward situation by a flaw or a shift, it may well be that a close engagement of the van would have yielded a favourable result. His stronger ships, pouring in a hot fire at a close range, must speedily have crushed the four light 30-gun ships in the van and possibly have disabled them, in which event La Bourdonnais, short of provisions as he was, would have been in a dilemma as to what to do. A similar concentration might have been made upon the rear, but having so few ships Peyton could not have prevented the French van from tacking and doubling upon him; in which case he would have been engaged on both sides and in a disadvantageous position as his crews were insufficient fully to man even the whole of the guns of one side, and he would have risked being boarded and destroyed.

In spite of the advantages which might have resulted from an attack upon the van, it is quite another thing to condemn Peyton for not having made it. We do not know whether in the circumstances of the wind it was practicable, nor how much he was hampered by the 'Medway' and her leaky condition. We know, however, that no signals existed at the time for making such a disposition, and we know that it would not have been in accord with the tactical ideas of the day. Such an innovation is more frequently the outcome of a gradually developing thought than a brilliant inspiration on the spur of the moment.

The 'Preston' and 'Winchester' soon beat the two foremost ships of the French out of the line. These bore away to leeward, ran down the lee side of their line and formed astern. The two leading British ships being now without opponents—for it is obvious that they could not bear away after the enemy without risking separation from their comrades—were soon after ordered by Peyton to tack, and the whole

British squadron eventually went about in succession, and then steering about E.S.E. passed the French squadron on the opposite tack, engaging as they went, the last British ship coming round at about 6.30. As the 'Preston' passed the 'Medway' Peyton hailed Lord Northesk and directed him not to fight in the dark; when therefore the 'Preston' had passed the last ship of the enemy's line at about 6.45, Northesk led on to the eastward for another quarter of an hour and then went about again to follow the French squadron on its weather quarter. Peyton again hailed as the 'Preston' passed the flagship and directed her to lead for the night and keep sight of the enemy, with the intention of renewing the engagement at daylight. For all the long range at



which the action had been fought—perhaps indeed partly in consequence of it—the ships had suffered considerably aloft, and the night was therefore spent in repairing damages.

Next morning at daylight the enemy were still in sight, bearing north-easterly about three leagues distant and standing to the northward under their topsails. Peyton made sail and formed line of battle, steering towards them, and by noon had drawn up to within two leagues, the enemy then bearing N.E. The wind, which had fallen away nearly to a calm by noon, continued very light during the afternoon, and at half past five, seeing no chance of coming to an action before night, Peyton called the captains of the two rear ships on board to consult. Captain Carteret of the 'Harwich' reported that his masts were so



badly wounded that he could not carry sail, on hearing which Peyton called the remaining Captains for a council of war, "to take the counsel of my captains for my proceedings in so nice a point; who were unanimous in their opinions that in our present circumstances we ought not to attack the enemy again, but proceed according to a former resolution in going to Trincomalee to stop if possible the ships' leaks and fit the squadron for further service with all expedition<sup>1</sup>."

Peyton acted upon this decision. How far the Commanders of the several ships were justified in their opinion as to the condition of their ships, it is not possible for us at this distance of time and in our ignorance of the actual state of the squadron to say. Seamen must perforce be diffident in criticising in such a case, and if the spars were in such a condition<sup>2</sup> that pursuit were impossible, the decision of the council must have been the only one that could be made; while the fact that the repairs to the ships at Trincomalee occupied from July 1st till July 27th seems to point to the damages being considerable. On the other hand the French were shewing no indisposition to renew the engagement, and Peyton had drawn up from three leagues to two during the forenoon, so that, provided sail could be carried as it had been all through the day, there was reasonable prospect to anticipate that the enemy might be brought to action next day. An officer of the 'Preston,' however, in an account of this affair<sup>3</sup>, remarks that it would have been impossible to come up with the enemy before reaching Pondicherry, and that the decision to refit before seeking another engagement was a proper one, considering that the best of the British ships had received much damage aloft, and that the result of the loss of the squadron would have been the loss also of all the British settlements in the Indies.

La Bourdonnais claimed a victory and, in so far as he beat off the British squadron without losing any of his own ships, he achieved a certain success. He did not, however, follow up this success with a renewal of the engagement next day, but continued to stand easily to the northward under topsails. It may be that he was then inviting attack; but he did not haul his wind, go about, or bring to, all of which lay in his power if he were anxious to compass the total defeat of the enemy. Instead, he went on towards Pondicherry. Apart from such expectation of success or otherwise as he may have entertained, there were two considerations affecting his conduct. For one thing he

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Captain Peyton, June 26th, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> The main and mizen masts of 'Medway's Prize' were both badly wounded, the latter so much that her officers "expected it go over the side every minute. Journal of 'Medway.'

<sup>3</sup> *A narrative of the transactions of the British squadrons in the East Indies.*

had but 24 hours' provisions<sup>1</sup> on board some of his ships; for another he was uncertain of his position and he feared being driven to leeward to Pondicherry. He believed himself to be in lat. 11° 30'; the winds were southerly night and day—between S.E. and S.W.—and a strong northerly current was running. Pondicherry lies in lat. 12° and he therefore had only 30 miles to go before he would be to leeward of it both as regards wind and current. It was thus no unimportant matter for him to make sure that he could get into harbour, and we can understand that he may have been anxious on this score. For all that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that if he felt the British were really a beaten squadron he should have kept to windward and completed their destruction next day. Such inconvenience or danger as some of his ships might run from remaining at sea a day longer were not comparable to the advantages to be derived from assuring the destruction of the enemy. The best evidence that he could have furnished as to the reality of his victory would have been an attempt to follow it up and so to have gained its full fruits. Pasley's aphorism<sup>2</sup> may be remembered and applied: "Never stand still in the moment of victory whilst anything more remains to be done. By so doing you may lose a kingdom while you are exulting in the conquest of a province." May it not be that while exulting in the defeat of the British squadron, La Bourdonnais contributed towards the loss of an Empire?

The French arrived at Pondicherry on July 7th. La Bourdonnais landed the large sum of money he had brought for the settlement and set about to refit and re-arm his ships in order that he might engage the British with a more definite superiority. He fully appreciated that his efforts must lie in the direction of the destruction of Peyton's squadron and that Peyton would endeavour to obtain a reinforcement. "Les Anglais," he wrote to Duplex on 17th July, "n'ont effectivement d'autre parti à prendre que celui d'augmenter leur escadre; en elle seule consistent toutes leurs forces; détruite, nous sommes en état de pousser loin nos avantages et même entreprendre sur leurs principales colonies<sup>3</sup>." But while he thus appears to argue that his force was superior to Peyton's, he was strongly averse from attempting an attack on any of those colonies until the British squadron was out of the way. Writing on the subject of an attack on Madras, which was his favourite scheme, he said, "Rien ne serait plus assuré que cette conquête si nous n'avions rien à appréhender de l'escadre de l'ennemi. Il sem-

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoire pour M. de la Bourdonnais, etc.*

<sup>2</sup> Pasley's *Essay on the military policy and institutions of the British Empire.*

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoire pour le Sieur de la Bourdonnais Paris, 1751.*

blerait donc qu'un préliminaire indispensable serait sa destruction." To attempt cruiser warfare would be equally useless. In order to effect anything in an attack on trade he must scatter his ships and run the risk of defeat in detail by the concentrated squadron of Peyton. Peyton's destruction, he clearly saw, was his first and principal object.

With these ideas firmly fixed he applied to Dupleix for a loan of guns, 58 in number, to complete his armaments. Boarding, he said, he had found was impossible, for the enemy's ships sailed better and were better handled than his own. Pondicherry would be exposed to no danger by the temporary weakening of its defences, for the enemy could make no attempt on it so long as the French squadron was on the coast. Dupleix, however, at first refused to lend the guns. He said the British squadron might be reinforced either from England or from Bombay, and that the addition of two ships and some local 20-gun craft would put Peyton in a position to engage La Bourdonnais; in such a case, he argued, what help would the fortress be if the French squadron required shelter and no guns were there to give the required protection? For an able man like Dupleix to reason thus appears incomprehensible. If La Bourdonnais's squadron could be so strengthened as to render it capable, as its Commander considered it, of destroying the British squadron, or even of engaging it in a well contested action, there would be no need of defences on the walls of the town, for no attack could be made. Pondicherry itself was in no danger. For nearly two years the British squadron had been unopposed, yet had made no attempt on the town, for the natural reason that there were no British land forces with which an attack could be made. In the end Dupleix gave way to La Bourdonnais's representations and furnished the squadron with 40 guns from the town bastions<sup>1</sup>.

While this correspondence with the Governor was in progress La Bourdonnais detached some ships to attack the British Company's vessels lying in Madras Road, a service that was very ineffectually carried out; and then having refitted and victualled he sailed from Pondicherry and down the coast to Negapatam to find the British squadron.

Peyton, having also completed his refit, temporarily caulking the 'Medway's' leak in her garboard strake with oakum, weighed on July 27th and arrived off Negapatam early in the afternoon of August 6th. Fourteen sail under Dutch colours could be seen lying at anchor in the road. Before long these vessels got under way and stood out in line to the eastward before a S.W. wind, and as they drew nearer Peyton was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. Hamont, *Dupleix*. See also Marquis de Nazelle, *Dupleix et la défense de Pondichéry*.

able to make them out as the French squadron. He therefore formed line and steered to get to windward of them. By sunset the headmost ship of the French bore N. 30 E. six or seven miles distant.

Next morning a change of wind put the enemy to windward. La Bourdonnais at once took advantage of the position, made all sail and bore down upon Peyton; but before he reached the British the wind, after first falling light, shifted round to the southward, and Peyton who had now the weather gage in turn bore down upon the French, who, having become scattered while pressing to the southward, were forced to make away to the northward to reform their line.

At 1 P.M. Peyton made the signal for the line of battle large. An hour later he was near enough to make out that the enemy carried more guns than when last he met them. "In our nearer approach to the enemy," he writes in his Journal, "we found they had reinforced themselves so much since our engaging them on the 25th of last June that I thought it proper to try them in sailing. Made the signal for leading ships to make the same sail that we did<sup>1</sup>."

The artillery superiority of the French was certainly now unquestionable, and Peyton, having thus held off throughout the day and proved his squadron's better sailing qualities, next morning called a council of war which unanimously agreed "that we ought not to hazard an engagement with them at present but proceed to cruise off the Fryar's Hood in order to join and protect the convoy daily expected from Europe." In accordance with this decision Peyton went about, left La Bourdonnais unwatched, and returned to the coast of Ceylon.

For a second time the council of war had resolved on the less courageous course. Weaker though Peyton was than La Bourdonnais, he was formidable and had the advantage in sailing and the French Commander was under no illusions as to the powers of interference still possessed by the enemy. Returning to Negapatam, after finding that he could not bring Peyton to action, he thence dropped down to Pondicherry, where he learned to his surprise that the British had been seen sailing towards Ceylon. Still he felt uneasy about attacking Madras. "They hold us in check," he wrote, "for if, when we may have effected our landing and our ships are denuded of their crews, they should suddenly fall upon us, they would burn and sink all our ships, or take them, and also succour Madras." He was, in fact, extremely apprehensive of making any attempt upon Madras so long as Peyton were free to reappear at any moment; and Peyton needed only to remain cruising in those parts, without even risking an engage-

<sup>1</sup> 'Medway's' Journal, August 7th, 1746.

ment, to have prevented any attempt upon Madras from being made<sup>1</sup>.

La Bourdonnais's opinion was overruled by the council at Pondicherry, and an attack upon Madras ordered. Thither therefore the French sailed with their whole squadron in the beginning of September, and laid siege to the weakly fortified town, which, after an opposition even more feeble than its defences warranted, capitulated on September 10th without having sustained any material losses, and still in possession of ammunition and stores ample for a prolonged resistance.

When the news of the fall of Madras reached England the outcry was great. The powerful East India Company poured blame upon Peyton, accusing him roundly of cowardice; and though his case never came to a trial, history has accepted that he was guilty of misconduct of the worst kind. No one can deny that he and his Captains in council made a grave error in judgment; but the Company and their servants were themselves far from guiltless. The money which they might have furnished to defend their possessions was withheld, their settlement was left ill-fortified, its garrison weak. The ships of the Company might, when danger threatened, have been added to the Commodore's command, like those of the French Company; but this was not done. Even the final surrender was dominated by mercantile rather than by military considerations, the Governor and his council believing that they were better serving the interests of their Company by giving in than by resisting to the last. The bargain turned out, as is likely with such bargains, to be on the contrary a very bad one.

Peyton, having gone back to the station off Ceylon, cruised there until the 18th of August, when he learned from a Dutch ship that the outward bound convoy, for the safety of which he had come south, had passed Point de Galle on July 29th. On hearing this he at once prepared to return up the coast to protect the convoy from French cruising ships. With this intention he sailed to the northward; but calling at Pulicat on the way he there received information on the 23rd August that the whole French squadron had stood into Madras roads on the 19th and had fired upon the town and the shipping. The Commodore at once held a council of war to consider the situation. The French were evidently keeping their superior squadron together and not cruising in scattered units, and his intentions as to protecting the convoy could now not be carried out. There was no longer any need for his presence off Ceylon, and all that appeared to him possible was to cruise against the French trade on the coast and threaten interference

<sup>1</sup> Cf. John Byng's similar opportunity off Minorca after his engagement with de la Gallissonnière; and Vernon's estimate of the situation at Cartagena.

with any operations the enemy's squadron might undertake. But he was short of provisions, and, while Madras was the only port on the coast at which he could obtain sufficient supplies, it was considered too near the enemy and too exposed for the squadron to go thither and revictual; moreover, at any moment the enemy's superior force might come upon the ships from seaward, with a sea breeze in which they could not weigh, and catch them without a chance of escape. The patching up of the 'Medway' had also proved ineffectual and her leak had opened up again. Taking all these facts into consideration, and believing Madras to be in no danger, Peyton and his council unanimously resolved to go to Bengal and join the convoy.

It is difficult to understand why the council of war was not better informed as to the strength of the Madras defences. When the news of its fall reached the squadron, Peyton wrote that they had just heard of the loss "to our great surprise, no one thinking the place in any danger." Whether they over-estimated the strength of the defences or the measure of resistance that the Governor would offer does not appear, but it would rather seem that their judgment as to the latter was in error. That Madras was weak was known well to Barnett, as we have already seen in his letter to Anson; and both the condition of its defences and the smallness of its garrison should have been well known to all the commanding officers of the squadron, since they had taken part in so many councils in which the security of the settlements had been under discussion. They had all at different times visited Madras and had had opportunity of acquainting themselves with its condition. The surprise which Peyton expressed at the fall of the settlement does not excuse him for leaving it unprotected. It was his duty to know its condition and the extent to which he could rely both on its walls and its garrison to maintain themselves.

When he reached Calcutta, warned perhaps by the fate of Madras, he took steps to look at the defences; and their condition exercised an influence on his movements. A letter written by him on November 28th gives us an idea of the dilemma in which he found himself, but, owing to his habit of calling councils of war to make up his mind for him, it does not give us the solution he proposed to apply. The letter runs thus:

"The weak state of this place [Calcutta] both as to the fortification (if it may be called by that name) and number of soldiers to defend it, they not having above 200 Europeans in all, makes it difficult for me to determine what to do with the squadron<sup>1</sup> when we are fit for sea. If I leave this River, a part of the French squadron if they come this way must take the place almost without

<sup>1</sup> The squadron at Calcutta on that day consisted of 'Medway,' 'Preston,' 'Harwich,' 'Winchester,' 'Medway's Prize,' 'Lively.' It was 300 men short of complement.

opposition. If I stay here they may intercept everything that comes into these seas. If the company loses this place I am assured by the Governor they must fail; therefore I shall as soon as we are fit for the sea, call a council of war and lay before them the state of the place and the trade of the Indies as clear as I can, and take their opinion for my proceedings<sup>1</sup>."

The awkward situation in which a Commander finds himself when important points are inadequately defended is well illustrated in this episode. Unless he should be able to depend upon such places to hold out for a reasonable length of time, the whole of the powers of the squadrons at sea become restricted, initiative is lost, and a defensive and hesitating strategy may result.

There was, however, no need for Peyton to have been anxious, for the French naval and military Commanders on the Coromandel coast were at loggerheads, and far too busy in disputing each other's authority to dispute the command of the sea. La Bourdonnais, who had never been easy in his mind about attacking Madras while Peyton was still undefeated, had hastened the surrender of the town by hinting at the possibility of its restoration to the English on payment of a ransom of 1,100,000 pagodas<sup>2</sup>. But when the town fell Dupleix strictly forbade either restitution or ransom. La Bourdonnais, for all his fine qualities as a seaman, was at heart a corsair. He could rig, sail and fight a ship, he had great personal powers of leadership, but he was neither a great squadron Commander nor a statesman. The traditions of St Malo were too strong in his blood; and now the loss of booty was not to be borne. Paying no attention to the orders of Dupleix and the council, he continued his negotiations with the English Governor. Dupleix protested that he was exceeding his powers and a bitter correspondence began between the Commanders, and when Commissioners were sent to take over the captured settlement La Bourdonnais threatened them with imprisonment, and began to plunder the town. Eventually on October  $\frac{1}{12}$  he agreed to allow the representatives of the council of Pondicherry to take possession.

Next day a violent northerly gale burst over the anchorage. The north-east monsoon, which the Admiral had hoped to avoid, had broken and in a flash the French squadron was disabled. One ship foundered, another was wrecked, two others were dismasted. The quarrel with Dupleix now bore a bitter fruit. When La Bourdonnais asked for help in refitting his ships it was refused. When he asked for guns to replace his lost ordnance they too were refused on the plea that the defence of Pondicherry would be weakened. The pitiful disagreements were increased on the arrival of M. d'Ordelin with three ships from Europe, bringing positive orders from the French East India

<sup>1</sup> Captain's letters, Peyton, November 28th, 1746.

<sup>2</sup> One pagoda = 75. 6d.

Company to place the ships under the Governor of Pondicherry. La Bourdonnais, contending that all vessels must be under his command, ordered the new arrivals to join him at Madras. The position of the Captains was uncomfortable, for the King's commission carried by the Admiral gave him jurisdiction over affairs at sea, and thus their choice had to be made between obeying the sea Commander or the Governor in India. They chose the latter, and declining to obey the Admiral's orders were supported in their refusal by Dupleix. La Bourdonnais endeavoured to exercise his authority, and repeated the order for two ships to join him on the Malabar coast, whither he intended to sail and attack the English as soon as he should be refitted, and for four others to proceed to the islands; but none of his commands were obeyed.

The refit was completed by the end of October and La Bourdonnais with the 'Achille,' 70, 'Lys,' 36, and 'Sunatre' returned to the islands, feeling himself too weak to seek out Peyton. D'Ordelin, acting on orders from Dupleix proceeded with four<sup>1</sup> ships to Achin. Thus the superiority which the French might have used in a last attempt at overthrowing the British power, was wasted for petty and sordid causes. If the French ships had sailed directly for Achin, instead of being delayed by quarrels and diminished in strength, they would have found there at anchor a weak British detachment which with their whole force they could easily have crushed; but by the time they arrived this detachment had sailed, and their chance of destroying two British squadrons piecemeal was gone. "Occasion turneth a bald noddle after she hath presented her locks in front and no hold taken." The opportunity lost was never recovered.

On April 8th, 1746, Commodore Thomas Griffin had sailed from England with the 'Princess Mary,' 60, to reinforce and relieve Barnett. He brought with him a convoy of five East Indiamen, and was joined on his way by the 'Pearl,' 40, at Madeira, and a few other merchantmen. Griffin's instructions, like those to Barnett, were drafted by the Secret Committee of the East India Company. Dated March 31st, 1746<sup>2</sup>, they ordered him to sail with all despatch, watering at Madeira and St Augustine's Bay and calling nowhere else, and to make the best of his way to Point de Galle, passing through the Eight Degree Channel. It was anticipated that he would meet Barnett's squadron off the coast of Ceylon. In such case he would place himself under Barnett's orders. If Barnett were not there Griffin was to remain cruising till the 1st of August and then proceed to Fort St David's, where he would either find

<sup>1</sup> 'Centaure,' 74; 'Mars,' 56; 'Brillant,' 50; 'St Louis,' 36.

<sup>2</sup> These are in Secret Orders, Out letters, 1331. The East India Company's draft is in In letters, 3912.



the Commodore or receive information of his whereabouts from the Governor.

Griffin took with him a sealed packet containing further instructions to Barnett, wherein the Commodore was directed to cruise till the 1st August off Ceylon; and then to refresh his ships at Fort St David's and keep the squadron at sea to intercept French vessels bound to Pondicherry. He was particularly instructed to keep daily touch with Fort St David's so that any information the Governor should have might immediately be transmitted to him. If any French ships should arrive from Europe and get into Pondicherry Road he was recommended to destroy them at anchor, if this should appear to him feasible. His principal duty being the protection of trade, the movements of his squadron were to be regulated by the movements of the Company's ships; he was to escort them from port to port and arrive at the various depôts—Fort St David's, Madras, Bengal—at such times as the trade should be ready to sail. It was therefore impressed upon him that he must consult and advise with the various Governors, taking their opinion in writing when opportunity offered; but it was left to the Commodore to decide whether or not he should communicate his intentions to them.

Over and above this protection of the East India Company, Griffin was to attack the enemy's trade in every way that he could. He was given permission to detach a portion of his squadron for this purpose, if by so doing he could render more effectual service, but was first to be well satisfied that such detachment could be made without risk to the trade of the East India Company. There was to be no leaving the British merchantmen unprotected in order to seek after prize money. Defence was the principal object.

Thus the general system of trade protection was to consist of convoys, whose sailing would depend upon the ladings<sup>1</sup>. When the homeward bound trade was ready, two ships of the squadron were to escort it home, proceeding by a given route to a rendezvous laid down by the Secret Committee. This was usually St Helena, though occasionally other places, such as Flores, were chosen. As soon as the convoy left India, the agents of the Company sent a despatch home overland to inform the Directors of the expected time of its arrival at the rendezvous; the Directors passed on the information to the Admiralty, who sent one or more ships to meet the East Indiamen at the appointed spot, from whence it was brought by certain laid-down courses to England. These courses were varied. In 1745 the ships after

<sup>1</sup> The Company sent from 15 to 18 ships to India yearly (Hinchinbrooke Papers).

leaving St Helena were ordered to pass 30 to 40 leagues west of Ascension and to continue straight on until they reached lat. 54°30' N., when they were to steer east till within 30 or 40 leagues of Ireland, at which point they were to haul up to lat. 53° and put into Galway Bay if not escorted. If under convoy they were to come direct up channel. Three additional men-of-war were, if available, sent to cruise between lat. 48°30' and 50°, between the Scillies and 100 leagues to the westward, to reinforce the escort and carry the ships to the Downs<sup>1</sup>.

Griffin reached Madagascar on the 28th of July, and after spending a month there refreshing his crews, sailed for Achin where he anchored on October 23rd—just as the French ships were leaving Pondicherry for the same port. Here he heard of Barnett's death, and in accordance with his own instructions, he opened those he had brought out for Barnett. It was now too late to cruise off Pondicherry on account of the N.E. monsoon, and as the Bengal trade would be preparing to sail, he went to the Ganges and anchored in Ingeloe Road on the 14th November, where he was joined by Peyton on the 23rd December with the 'Harwich,' 'Preston' and 'Winchester,' and shortly after by the 'Medway's Prize' and 'Lively'<sup>2</sup>.

Griffin's first act was to suspend Peyton and send him home under all possible circumstances of indignity, evincing a spirit that indicated a desire rather to please the powerful East India directors than to execute justice upon an offending officer. Peyton on his arrival in England demanded a court martial to enquire into his conduct, and the Admiralty promised him one. One officer of unquestioned reputation—John Forbes—considered him a badly used man<sup>3</sup>. But the East India directors, who concealed their own sins of omission and published vituperative accounts of Peyton's conduct, when called upon by the Admiralty to formulate charges refused to say a word, declaring they "had made no charge against any of the King's officers, not deeming themselves judges of military operations." Like the Assembly of Antigua in Lee's case, they were ready to attack Peyton in writing; but they were not prepared to expose themselves to the disclosures that would have resulted from a public trial. After 18 months of weary waiting, Peyton died in September, 1749, with the enquiry into his character and his actions still unmade<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Admiralty, I. 3912. I am indebted to Captain Hudleston for bringing these orders to my notice.

<sup>2</sup> His squadron then consisted of 'Princess Mary,' 60; 'Medway,' 60; 'Preston,' 50; 'Harwich,' 50; 'Pearl,' 40; 'Winchester,' 50; 'Medway's Prize,' 40; 'Lively,' 20; 'Fogo,' fireship; and 'Calcutta,' sloop.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the biography of Peyton in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>4</sup> He appears to have died after an operation for the stone, which, he writes on September 7th, 1749, he was about to undergo.

Shortly after Griffin's departure from Achin, the four French ships under d'Ordelin arrived there. When he heard of the presence of this British reinforcement, the French Commander wasted no time, but hastily returned to Pondicherry where he appeared on January 7th. His appearance caused the gravest uneasiness to the council at Fort St David's. Only a month earlier, profiting by the absence of the British squadron from the coast, the French had set in motion an attempt upon the station at Cuddalore. An expedition consisting of 1700 men had left Pondicherry on December 7th and attacked the fort. This had been driven off without much difficulty, but the re-appearance of a naval force naturally aroused fears of a land and sea attack. These happily proved to be groundless, for the French squadron had no such sinister motives in view; the fact being, though the English could not be aware of it, that it was so hampered by internal dissensions as to be practically paralysed for effective action. The command of the French squadron was in a chaotic state. While d'Ordelin had received orders from La Bourdonnais to join him at Mauritius, where the Admiral intended to re-arm the ships with all the guns he could procure and once more attack the British, Dupleix, in direct opposition to the terms of La Bourdonnais's appointment, which gave the Admiral supreme command of all the sea forces, would not permit the ships to proceed, as the most recent arrivals had different instructions, which placed them under the orders of the Governor of Pondicherry. Half the ships were now under the Admiral, half under the Governor, and an impossible situation was created; it was only solved by La Bourdonnais returning to Europe and leaving the whole command by land and sea to Dupleix<sup>1</sup>.

After the failure at Cuddalore on December 7th, Dupleix prepared another and stronger force to carry the place before Griffin, of whose arrival he learned from the French ships from Achin, could return. Under the command of an able officer, M. Paradis, this second expedition left Pondicherry on February 28th, 1747. The local forces of the British Company were able to delay the enemy's advance for one day only; and on the following morning the French were close to the walls of the town. Hardly had the French guns opened fire on the fort than some sails appeared on the horizon. They could not belong to d'Ordelin's squadron, for, as Paradis knew, this had gone to guard the French settlements at Goa; and he could only conclude that they were Griffin's ships arriving just in time to spoil the French attempt. There was nothing to be done but to retreat, and this the French Commander began to do at once, leaving all his ammunition behind him. To return to Pondicherry in haste was vital, for his army

<sup>1</sup> Marquis de Nazelle, *Dupleix et la défense de Pondichéri*.

was composed of the whole available fighting force of the garrison, which, if cut off, would leave Pondicherry without defence. The British Admiral, arriving with a smart breeze, was in time to hasten the retreat of the French by the active measure of landing a large body of men from his squadron, who, simultaneously with a sally from the town, joined in the pursuit of the enemy<sup>1</sup>.

Griffin's appearance was most timely. A far-reaching success was snatched from the French and the attack on Cuddalore was converted into a blockade of Pondicherry. This reversal of the situation produced an excellent effect upon the mind of the Nabob of Arcot, who had long hovered between throwing in his lot with the English or French. When Dupleix refused to return Madras to the Nabob, he had come over to the English side, raised a large army, and attempted to retake the town. But Dupleix with a small force beat him soundly at San Thomé, and though this defeat kept the Nabob from another active attempt, it did not convince him as to which was the prospective winner; so, when the French made their attack upon Cuddalore in December, he had threatened their army and had been a partial cause of the failure. But when no British ships appeared, and Dupleix's troops increased in numbers, the Nabob gave up hopes of regaining Madras and agreed that it should remain in French hands; this cessation of interference on his part had enabled Dupleix to resume the attack on Cuddalore so opportunely broken by Griffin's appearance. The Nabob's further behaviour was wholly favourable to the British.

From May to September, 1747, Griffin blockaded Pondicherry, with his headquarters at Fort St David's. Throughout these months Dupleix eagerly awaited a reinforcement of ships from France. He had been informed from home that a large fleet was preparing at l'Orient to be escorted by men-of-war, which, when joined to d'Ordelin's squadron at Goa, would be superior to Griffin. The French Governor, anxious to bring the Nabob to a different frame of mind by shewing him that France was still a power at sea, and fearing to delay until the succours arrived from Europe, sent orders to d'Ordelin to return to the Coromandel coast, and at the same time others to Mauritius to expedite the sailing of the vessels at the islands<sup>2</sup>. But d'Ordelin and his captains had no stomach for a trip to the neighbourhood of Griffin's force. The only fit ships of the French squadron were the 'Centaure,' 'Mars' and 'Brillant,' and these were not in a very good condition, nor their crews

<sup>1</sup> General letter to the Court of Directors, March 16th, 1747. In letters 3912.

<sup>2</sup> The ships from Brest and l'Orient were due, if they sailed at the time Dupleix had been informed, to have reached Mauritius. There were four or five armed ships already there; and these, joined to d'Ordelin's force would, Dupleix hoped be a match for Griffin.

of great value. A council held by d'Ordelin agreed that it would be madness to venture near Griffin with three ill-conditioned ships, and that the proper action was to return to the islands. Despatching a letter to Dupleix to this effect, they prepared to sail for Mauritius in haste, in order to be out of reach before the Governor's reply could reach them<sup>1</sup>. Thus these captains, like Peyton, failed to appreciate the containing influence of a small body; but in the poor sailing qualities of their ships they had an excuse which he lacked.

Dupleix's hopes of the arrival of the strong reinforcement were doomed to disappointment, for this force was part of the combined squadron which Anson had defeated off Finisterre in May, 1747. Of all the ships destined for East Indian waters only the 'Lys,' under Bouvet de Lozier, the 'Apollon,' 54, the 'Anglesea,' 40, and two supply ships, which had become separated in a gale when St Georges first sailed, reached Port Louis, Mauritius on October 1st, 1747.

On September 21st Griffin, unhampered by any fears for Cuddalore, took his squadron off Madras. Manning and arming his boats under the command of Mr Hyde Parker, first lieutenant of the 'Princess Mary,' he sent them in to attack the shipping in the port. The French ship 'Neptune,' late a British East India ship, 'Princess Amelia,' was burnt in the road without difficulty. The squadron then returned to Cuddalore, and remained on that part of the coast until the end of November, when Griffin dropped down to Trincomalee to refit.

Bouvet de Lozier, as related above, arrived at Port Louis on October 1st. D'Ordelin joined him from the Malabar coast in December. The squadron thus gathered at the islands consisted of the 'Centaure,' 74, 'Mars,' 56, 'Brillant,' 50, 'Cybèle,' 20, 'Lys,' 36, 'Apollon,' 54, and 'Anglesea,' 40<sup>2</sup>.

Griffin was now in a good position. With a well-armed squadron, recently refitted, he lay in the track of the French trade and reinforcements. From February till June, 1748, he cruised uninterruptedly on the coast. His operations were limited to attack on trade and defence of the British settlements, for no land forces were available with which either to recover Madras or reduce any of the French settlements. For 18 months the British squadron had had an effectual command of the sea; but the want of troops had prevented him from making use of this command to shake the French power on shore, except in so far as the evidence of British superiority operated upon the native mind.

<sup>1</sup> *Dupleix et la défense de Pondichéry*, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> The 'Neptune' had been burnt, the 'St Louis' and 'Princess Mary' (the latter a captured East India Company ship) had been wrecked.

In May news reached Mauritius that another squadron of four ships<sup>1</sup> under M. d'Albert had sailed on the 12th January from Brest, and might soon be expected. At the same time it was known that a considerable squadron under Admiral Boscawen had left England in the beginning of November, bringing troops for a land expedition in India. The Governor of Mauritius, Pierre David, now had to choose whether Bouvet should wait for the arrival of d'Albert to sail in company with him, hoping still to be in time to crush Griffin before Boscawen could arrive, or to sail at once with the supplies which he knew Duplex so sorely needed. David decided that it would be dangerous to delay the relief; Bouvet must sail without awaiting the reinforcement<sup>2</sup>.

Accordingly Bouvet with his six ships, a scout and two storeships, left in the beginning of May. His object was clear before his eyes—to throw the supplies of ammunition, men and money into Madras and Pondicherry. On June 4th he made the coast of Ceylon and there heard that Griffin was in Cuddalore Road with six ships and four frigates. Bouvet thereupon sent the 'Cybèle' well ahead of the squadron to scout and warn him of the presence of the enemy, and, keeping his ships well together, stood up the coast.

On June 9th Griffin was anchored off Cuddalore with the majority of his squadron. The 'Harwich,' 50, was watching Pondicherry, lying at anchor off the port and within signal distance of the Admiral; the 'Lively,' 20, was scouting to the southward of Cuddalore, looking out for anything that might approach from that direction; the 'Eltham,' 40, and 'Pearl,' 40, were disabled with their rudders unhung for repair, but the remainder of the squadron, together with some East India ships which were now acting under Griffin's command<sup>3</sup>, was fit for service. About 11 at night guns were heard firing to the southward and shortly after—at near midnight—the 'Lively' came into harbour with the news that she had been chased off Negapatam by nine sail of large ships from which she had made her escape. Some of the Captains, who were on shore, also heard the guns and hastened on board. The ships were cleared for action and the intelligence brought by the 'Lively' was sent to Griffin who was sleeping in the town; it did not reach him before 4 A.M.

<sup>1</sup> 'Magnanime,' 'Alcide,' 'Arc-en-Ciel,' 'Cumberland.' Marquis de Nazelle, *Dupleix et la Défense de Pondichéry*, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Only one ship of this reinforcement—the 'Arc-en-Ciel'—eventually arrived. The squadron was scattered in a gale soon after leaving France, the 'Alcide' returned to harbour, the 'Cumberland' put into Coruña and remained there, the 'Magnanime' was captured by the British.

<sup>3</sup> Griffin's squadron consisted of 'Princess Mary,' 60 (flag); 'Exeter,' 60; 'York,' 60; 'Harwich,' 50; 'Preston,' 50; 'Medway's Prize,' 38; 'Winchelsea' (E.I.C.), 32; 'Bombay Castle' (E.I.C.), 32; 'Lively,' 20; 'Swift,' sloop.

Griffin at once returned, and was on board soon after 5 o'clock. He recalled the 'Harwich' from Pondicherry and loosed his foretopsail as a signal to weigh, but did nothing more.

The subsequent movements of the British ships were dictated very largely, but not entirely, by the wind and current. On this coast the prevailing winds at this time take the form of land and sea breezes, the land breeze blowing in the S.W. quarter, beginning about 11 at night and lasting until between 11 and 1 P.M. next day, when it works round through south as far as E.S.E. and blows freshly, bringing a choppy or even a heavy sea into the anchorage. The current runs strongly to the northward, sometimes at over two knots. As the trend of the coast is to the N.E., it will be realized that a ship putting to sea on the sea breeze would be driven very rapidly to the northward, and, whether she wished to go to the northward or southward, would not have much room to work in.

All through the forenoon the land wind continued blowing from the S.S.W. About 10 Captain Nucella—an officer who had been a lieutenant of the 'Marlborough' in the action of Toulon in 1744—went on board the 'Queen Mary' and asked Griffin if he did not think of going to sea. "He did not seem to give any positive answer, but did not seem averse to it neither. I think he said 'I shall see bye and bye'<sup>1</sup>." At noon, the land wind still blowing, the 'Exeter' made the signal for seeing six sail to the southward, which were running down along shore straight towards the British squadron.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon before Griffin took any steps. He then called a council of war and "put the question which was the best method to engage the enemy then coming in sight in the present state of the squadron, two of which, the Pearl and Eltham, were without their rudders<sup>2</sup>." The council agreed that the best method would be to tow the 'Pearl' into action, and to distribute 110 or 120 men of the 'Eltham's' crew among the other ships to strengthen their ship's companies. When the decision had been drawn up and signed, it was noticed that no mention was made in it of putting to sea and engaging, but as the French were approaching and might attack the squadron at anchor, time did not admit of drawing up the resolution afresh; but the Captains returned to their ships fully under the impression that so soon as the 'Eltham's' men were embarked, the squadron would put to sea against the French, unless indeed the latter forestalled them before they could get under way.

As the Captains returned on board their ships, the 'Harwich' came

<sup>1</sup> Evidence of Captain T. Nucella, trial of Admiral Griffin.

<sup>2</sup> Journal of Admiral Griffin. Minutes of court martial on Admiral Griffin.

into harbour and anchored. At the same time the French squadron, which now bore about S.E. and was some eight or nine miles off, brought to with its head to the northward of east, the wind being S.E. Griffin watched it and waited, the transfer of the 'Eltham's' men continuing briskly. After about a couple of hours, during which the enemy drifted under the influence of the wind and the northerly current until their bearing was brought up to E.S.E., they filled and stood to the southward. They were evidently not going to attack the British squadron, nor presumably lay themselves open to attack by going to leeward of it. "Upon this cautious behaviour of the enemy," wrote Griffin<sup>1</sup>, "I again consulted the captains whether we should not go out and keep turning in the fairway between them and Pondicherry to hinder their getting in or landing any supplies; but the general opinion was to lie still until the weather grew more moderate, as whoever went out now must anchor or be drove to the northward by the strong current."

There is considerable divergence between this account of the consultation—of which no record was taken in writing—and those given by the Captains who took part. Captain Harry Powlett, afterwards Griffin's principal accuser, said that the Captains then expressed great dislike at the Admiral's proceedings. "When Mr Griffin asked an opinion at the second consultation," he said, "we told him we had agreed in the former to go out and attack the enemy, and we were surprised at his asking our opinion a second time. He said if we had gone out we could not have come up with them; but we told him we might have got so near as to have kept sight of them all night and prevented their escape. We advised him to send a cruiser out to keep sight of them, and that we might be led to them by her signals. He said he would, but he did not<sup>2</sup>."

Darkness fell, and the French squadron was last seen to the southward, standing away from Cuddalore. Griffin remained at anchor until the strong sea breeze dropped, which was at about half past eleven, and then made the signal to weigh. At 1 A.M. the squadron put to sea with a moderate land breeze from the northward of west, and stood to the northward close hauled until it was about midway between Pondicherry and Fort St David's and some 12 miles from the shore, when Griffin anchored. When daylight broke nothing was to be seen of the French squadron.

The first thing to do was to endeavour to get intelligence. The Admiral sent a barge into Fort St David's and detached a sloop—the

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Admiral Griffin.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence, Captain Powlett. Court martial on Admiral Griffin.



'Lapwing,' an East India ship—to the southward to Negapatam, whither the French might have returned. The barge returned at half past two in the afternoon but brought no news; a council then sat to determine on the next step. In the absence of any information, it was decided that the best thing to do was to remain where they were. To go to the northward would expose Cuddalore, if, as seemed likely, the French had returned to the southward; and would also place the squadron so far to leeward, both with regard to wind and tide, that the enemy returning rapidly from a southerly direction might capture the place before the squadron could come to its relief.

Nothing was seen of the French all through the 11th, and still no news was received. Griffin then decided to sail for Madras, and when the wind came off shore at about 10 P.M., he weighed and stood in that direction, sending the 'Lively' ahead to scout when daylight came. A Dane was met, but she had seen nothing of the enemy; however there were hopes of finding them at Madras, and the squadron therefore pressed on to the northward. But when the roadstead was sighted between three and four in the afternoon it was empty. Griffin at once went about to beat to the southward again, whither the French might have doubled, but sent two small craft—the 'Lively' and 'Swallow'—to Vizagapatam to warn the settlement that the French squadron was upon the coast.

By now the 'Eltham' by great exertions had got her rudder replaced, and that afternoon she rejoined the squadron which then began its stiff beat to the southward. About 8 in the evening Griffin met another Danish ship from which he received the first news of the French since he had lost sight of them. They had passed this merchant about noon the day before, eight sail in company, steering to the N.N.W. It was clear that they had been to Madras and completed their mission before Griffin got sight of them.

Two days later—at noon on the 14th—the 'Pearl' joined the squadron, and all the ships were now in company. At 6 P.M. Griffin ran into Madras road to see if any intelligence were to be gained. There he received a letter from Cuddalore informing him that in the absence of the squadron a party of 2000 French had left Pondicherry and attacked the town, but had been repulsed. Griffin had greatly feared this attack and though its issue had been more favourable than he had hoped the attempt might well be renewed. To hasten the arrival of assistance he sent the barge and long boat manned and armed, working down in shore where the current was slack, and made sail immediately with the squadron, ordering the ships to make the best of their way independently to Fort St David's.

Another four days were taken up in beating down to the British settlement, and though guns were heard firing all that time Griffin found when he arrived that the place was safe and the enemy troops withdrawn. But the French had fully succeeded in what they attempted. Bouvet had not been near Pondicherry. So soon as he had made his feint to the southward on the evening of the 9th, and darkness had covered his movements, he had put before the wind and proceeded with all possible speed to Madras, landed his men, money and supplies, and without waiting an instant longer than was necessary for putting them ashore he had begun his homeward journey back to Mauritius. The supplies for Pondicherry were taken overland.

The attack upon Cuddalore had a dual object. Dupleix was aware that a number of the garrison had been embarked on board Griffin's squadron, so that the defence was weakened. There was a great quantity of stores lying there for the squadron and its reinforcement. No more valuable service could be done towards defending Pondicherry than the capture of the principal base of the British squadron, or, at least, the destruction of its reserves of stores. The opportunity presented by the absence of the squadron and the weakness of the garrison was one not to be missed; and, at the same time, no diversion could more opportunely assist Bouvet, since Griffin would be obliged to abandon pursuit to secure his weakly defended base. All the conditions which constitute a favourable opportunity for a diversion were in fact present, and an intelligent use of it was made by co-ordinated action by land and sea.

Thus Griffin had entirely failed to prevent the French from succouring Pondicherry. The supplies it so urgently needed in view of the anticipated attack had been thrown in, and the French squadron had not been intercepted either on its outward or homeward journey. Bouvet had effected the object of his cruise in the face of considerably superior forces. Griffin's superiority on the morning of June 10th was not however so great as it appeared on paper. Bouvet's information was that Griffin had six ships and four frigates. Griffin had actually five ships of over 50 guns and five of from 32 to 40 guns, of which two 40-gun ships were unready and two 32-gun ships were East Indiamen. The squadron was at anchor on a lee shore, in no manner of order<sup>1</sup>; it lay exposed to an attack from sea, and if the French had boldly sailed in and attacked it at anchor they would have caught Griffin at a serious disadvantage. Bouvet, from the distance at which he observed the English squadron, could not see this—the nearest

<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the court martial shew that the squadron was not anchored in line of battle nor in any formation which could resist an attack.

he came was about seven miles—nor could he tell that his report was inaccurate and that it over-estimated the British strength. Trusting to the information he had, and to such observation as he could make from that great distance, he decided to carry out his object by evading the enemy. Although it would be improper to judge his action by the light of information of which he was not in possession, it is permissible to make the comment that he might have closed the enemy and made a more accurate reconnaissance. He had the weather gage, the enemy was at anchor in an awkward position, and the risk of approaching closer would have been fully justified. There can be little question that by not verifying his intelligence the French Commander missed an opportunity of striking a most serious blow at the English power in India.

But if Bouvet missed an opportunity, Griffin missed a greater one. He had the news that the enemy was on the coast in ample time to weigh and put to sea to meet him with the off-shore wind; but he waited. His reasons for waiting are not clear. Like Bouvet, he had incorrect intelligence as to the strength of the enemy, whom he believed to be coming with nine ships of force, whereas their actual number was but six besides a 20-gun ship and two storeships. He seems also to have believed that if he put to sea he would be driven to leeward of Cuddalore and so leave it and its shipping exposed to the French squadron and the garrison of Pondicherry. Witnesses for his defence—officers of his flagship principally—supported this contention. Captain Hyde Parker of the 'Lively'<sup>1</sup> thought that Griffin did better not to sail on the 10th "because he must have fallen to leeward of Fort St David, and the French were watching every opportunity to attack it from Pondicherry." Nicholas Vincent, first lieutenant of the 'Princess Mary,' and Captain Weston of the 'Exeter' took the same view, but the bulk of opinion was in the opposite sense. The fact that the 'Harwich,' leaving Pondicherry at 6 A.M. was able to beat up to Cuddalore and could have fetched some miles to windward of it<sup>2</sup>, is evidence that if Griffin had gone to sea at once he could have kept to windward of Cuddalore; and the unanimous opinion of the Captains was that the squadron should have weighed in the forenoon. When the sea breeze came in it was more questionable whether it were better to go out or to remain in harbour. The Captains of the men-of-war considered the squadron should have put to sea, if only to keep touch with the enemy and prevent him from getting to the northward, though they agreed

<sup>1</sup> He had been promoted out of the 'Princess Mary' into the 'Lively' by Griffin.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence of Lieut. Peter Cowl and Mr John Cannon, master, of 'Harwich,' "We came in with a flown sheet three or four points from the wind."

that it would not be possible to bring him to action if he hauled his wind. The Captains of the East India ships were of an opposite opinion, but their views were based solely upon the consideration of whether the squadron could hold its own against the wind and current, and the effect upon the East India Company's settlement at Cuddalore if it were driven to leeward. Once the sea breeze set in there was admittedly room for diversity of opinion as to whether the squadron could keep to windward; but there is no doubt that the squadron could have sailed in the forenoon and that if this had been done the British would have been in the best position to frustrate the enemy's designs.

The court which tried Griffin when he returned to England did not impugn his courage, but they found grave fault with his conduct and judgment. They found that he did not get his squadron into a fit posture to fight on the night of the 9th; and that when he went on board at 5 A.M. he did not immediately take the most expeditious methods of getting his squadron ready, as he might have done by distributing the crews of the 40-gun ships. He could and should have sailed with the land wind. By not doing so they found that he gave the enemy the opportunity of prosecuting their designs, and that by sailing he would have been in a better position both to attack the enemy or to receive an attack from them and equally to have protected Cuddalore and Fort St David's. The court found further that after the sea breeze came in it would not have been advisable to weigh—an opinion, it will be observed, at variance with that of the Captains who composed the council of war—unless it were certain that the enemy had gone to leeward, as the Admiral could not have got up with and engaged the enemy if they desired to avoid him, and he would have been driven to leeward of Cuddalore and exposed it. They found that he should have sent out a cruiser to keep touch with the enemy, but that he was not to blame for not searching for the enemy on the 11th when he had no news of their whereabouts.

In consequence of these mistakes, the court found that Admiral Griffin fell under part of the 27th article of the act of Charles II for having negligently performed his duty, and sentenced him to be suspended from his rank and employment as a flag officer in H.M. Navy during the King's pleasure—a sentence which was subsequently put aside through parliamentary interest.

While these events were taking place in the East Indies, preparations for action to protect the Company's interests upon a larger scale were being made in England. The Secret Committee of the East India Company wrote to the Duke of Newcastle on April 24th, 1747<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Hardwicke Papers, B.M. Add. MS. 35906.

pointing out to him the danger to which all their settlements were now exposed. They complained that Peyton had done nothing to protect them, and urged that a squadron sufficient to drive the French from East Indian waters might be sent out, especially as it was known that reinforcements for the enemy were at that moment lying in one of the ports of the Bay of Biscay<sup>1</sup>. In consequence of this, a meeting of the Committee of Council was held at Newcastle House<sup>2</sup> a fortnight later, at which the members of the Secret Committee put forward their proposals in greater detail and amplitude. They first categorically stated that unless at least two ships of 70 and four of 60 guns were sent out from England by the 1st September, the trade could not be protected against the French; and they asked in addition that a land force of 1200 men in independent companies, which might make an attempt upon the French settlements with every prospect of success, should be placed under the orders of the Commodore. The Company stated they were prepared to provide the transport themselves without charge, and to place their ships for the time being under the orders of the naval Commander. The Lords of the Council were of opinion that "considering the importance of the East India trade, directions should be given for providing the number of ships above-mentioned to be ready to sail by the 1st of September," and that independent companies should be raised and sent as proposed. Thus, with ample time ahead of them, preparations could be made at home, and the agents of the Company in the East could be informed of what was afoot in order that all necessary steps might be taken to receive the expedition on its arrival, furnish it with the latest information, refresh the crews and refit the ships after their long voyage. That there was some difference of opinion concerning the command is shewn in a letter from Lord Vere Beauclerk to Anson, in which a jealousy of Warren is indicated and an assumption that Anson shares that feeling. Writing on May 15th he told the Admiral that the Company had been promised two 70's and four 60's, "a great secrett. The Duke of Bedford had a mind Mr Warren should go, which I prevented all I could and got Mr Legg to join, so now he thinks of Boscawen, but I conclude he will refuse as he will not command. . . . Some ships are to be ordered home from Medley to replace those that are to go to the East Indies<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> The squadron destroyed ten days later by Anson off Finisterre.

<sup>2</sup> Meeting of May 7th, 1747. Present, the Lord Chancellor, Lord President, Duke of Bedford, Earl of Chesterfield, Mr Pelham and Duke of Newcastle; and of the Secret Committee, Mr Gough, Mr Hume, Mr Mabbot and Mr Chauncy. S.P. Dom. Various, v.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Vere Beauclerk to Anson, May 15th, 1747. Anson Corr., B.M. Add. MS. 15955, f. 127.

Four days before the meeting of the council, Anson had already paved the way for the expedition by his decisive victory off Finis-terre, a victory which, among other matters, helped to open the eyes of the Administration to the importance attached by the French to India. Captured documents provided this enlightenment. "That their views in the East Indies are vast is plain from the great expense they have put themselves to to carry them into execution, of which we have a recent proof in the prizes made by Lord Anson, and the number of ships intended on the same service...As a further proof of their ambition we may add their having lately taken possession of a settlement at Mahé on the Malabar coast, not far from Cocheen, and at Karakal on the coast of Choromandel, close by Negapatam<sup>1</sup>."

Some months passed before the decisions of the council of May 7th could be put into effect. Ships had to be prepared at home and others withdrawn from the Mediterranean to fill their places; and in this interval the Dutch were approached and invited to cooperate. The British East India Company was prepared to join forces with the Dutch if the latter would furnish a proper number of ships of force with about 3000 men. Although the Prince of Orange was favourably inclined towards the project, the Secret Committee of the Dutch Company refused at first to furnish any assistance<sup>2</sup>, and eventually a reduction was made in the help requested from them. They were asked only that such ships of their Company as were outward bound should join the British expedition at the Cape and go with them to the islands, and that such of their recruits whom they would be sending to their garrisons in India should join in the enterprise. This, in the end, was partly conceded.

The date fixed for the sailing of the expedition was September 1st, but owing to the demands upon the Navy in all theatres during the summer of 1747 the ships were not ready by that date; and in the meantime, in spite of the importance of secrecy, the destination of the expedition as usual leaked out, and the French authorities in India and the islands received warning of Boscawen's approaching attack.

The outline of Boscawen's instructions was drafted by the Secret Committee of the East India Company, who throughout acted as the moving and advising spirit in all the operations in the East, in a capacity corresponding to that of a Staff. This proposed plan of operations,

<sup>1</sup> East India Committee to Lord Sandwich, August 7th, 1747. Hinchinbrooke Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Secret Committee to Lord Sandwich, August 7th, 1747. Hinchinbrooke Papers.

dated October 7th, 1747, was attached to Boscawen's instructions, dated October 14th, and ran as follows:

*Plan of operations, recommended with great deference by the Secret Committee of the East India Company to his Majesty's forces intended to go to the East Indies under the command of the Honble Rear Admiral Boscawen.*

That he proceed with the fleet under his command to the Cape of Good Hope without stopping anywhere after passing Madeira unless he judge it necessary for refreshment, in which case St Jago, one of the Cape Verde Islands is recommended as the properest place.

The advices the Admiral may get at the Cape of what may have passed to the eastward of it between his Majesty's forces and the enemy may in some measure point out to him where to begin his operations to most advantage. But in the situation the Committee judge affairs to be in at present they think it most advisable to go from the Cape directly to Mauritius, taking the island Diego Rays [*i.e.* Rodriguez] in his way to get intelligence, if possible. The taking the island Mauritius is of the greatest consequence, which the Admiral being sufficiently sensible of, the Committee rely on his utmost endeavours to succeed in it, if he finds it can be done without absolutely weakening the forces too much for carrying on the remainder of the plan<sup>1</sup>.

If he succeeds in taking Mauritius he may be thoroughly informed of the state of the French naval force and several colonies throughout India and according to these informations he may proceed or not to Mascarene [*i.e.* Bourbon] and the east coast of Madagascar in pursuit of the enemy's ships before he proceeds to the coast of Coromandel.

The taking the island Mascarene would be a great loss to the French, though as it hath no port or any sort of shelter for shipping, if they lose Mauritius, Mascarene will be of little use to them in their military views. It is therefore submitted to the Admiral if he may think proper to attempt anything against this island at that time<sup>2</sup>.

If the design against Mauritius do not take place, it will be very proper to visit the coast of Mascarene and Madagascar, and to refresh the forces at the latter in order to arrive in the better condition on the coast of Coromandel, which place it is recommended to the Admiral to repair to with all diligence.

At his arrival on the coast of Coromandel he will be informed immediately by Mr Hynde, the Company's chief Governor there, of all that can be learnt of the strength of the enemy both by sea and land on that coast, the Committee having already sent him private instructions for that purpose, so that the Admiral may immediately resolve where and in what manner to begin his operations.

It is strenuously recommended by the Committee that no time be lost in doing all that can be done on this coast, that the ships may retire from it in one season not to be exposed to the stormy weather at the latter end of the monsoon.

And in particular the Committee recommend in the strongest manner that the Admiral will dismiss the Company's ships joined to him in this expedition to act under his command so soon as he can possibly spare them, that they may proceed on their trading voyages.

The French besides their islands of Mauritius and Mascarene, and their several settlements on the coast of Coromandel, have a very considerable settlement at

<sup>1</sup> The importance attached to Mauritius was further emphasised in a separate letter from the Committee to Sandwich as "one of the most essential points of our scheme... The taking of the island Mauritius is of infinite importance as it is the enemy's grand magazin and nursery for all their attempts and a secure retreat for all their ships." Its retention was advised. "It ought to be kept, otherwise the French will immediately resume possession of it, and soon put it in a better state of defence than it is now." Hinchinbrooke Papers.

<sup>2</sup> The retention of Mascarene was also advised by the Committee.

Bengal called Chandanagar, and another at Mahé on the coast of Malabar. It is recommended to the Admiral to consider while he is on the Coromandel coast in what manner to conduct his force so as to have it in his powers to take these two places in a proper season, as also to consider what ships of his Majesty's he may think fit to return to Europe, which the Committee most earnestly desire may be disposed as to serve as a convoy to the Company homeward-bound ships in as full a manner as possible.

Should the design against the islands, or some other capital place be thought too hazardous to be undertaken, or miscarry if attempted, yet the smaller settlements may be taken, and as to all appearance his Majesty's naval force in those seas will be superior to what the enemy shall have there, the Committee are persuaded the Admiral will be able to protect the possessions and commerce of his Majesty's subjects and to distress and obstruct those of the enemy so entirely that their strength in India must be soon consumed, and the number they maintain in their strongholds will become a burthen rather than an advantage to them, if the Admiral can prevent their receiving succours from Europe.

As to the disposal of such other settlements as may be taken, the Committee think it will be of no advantage to their nation to keep them, but rather to dismantle and demolish them at once, as it will cost the enemy immense sums to re-establish themselves as well as be a great interruption to their trade for a long time after peace shall be restored. In this, however, the Committee submit to better judgment, and think it may be best that the demolishing or keeping places shall be left to the prudence of the Admiral, who being on the spot will be the best judge what part to take.

As the Committee is as yet uninformed whether the Dutch will or will not join his Majesty's forces on this occasion, this plan is framed on a supposition of having no assistance from them; should they join it need not be varied and in that case the Committee flatter themselves no part of it without extraordinary unforeseen accidents can miscarry. Moreover as the numbers to act against the enemy would be thereby greatly increased, it might be worth the consideration of the Admiral if it may not be proper to keep possession of Mauritius and Mascarene if taken.

Upon the whole the Committee, having entire confidence in the Admiral, in the humblest manner recommend that no part of this plan appear in the instructions to be given to him, but rather that they be in general terms to proceed by the Cape of Good Hope to the East Indies touching at such ports and places as he may think proper; to take all opportunities of attacking, taking and destroying the enemy and everything belonging to them as well by land as by sea, to protect to the utmost of his power his Majesty's subjects in their possessions, privileges and trade against the enemy and all others and that he return in due time in the most useful manner such part of his Majesty's forces as he can spare with safety.

H. GOUGH.

ALEX. HUME.

W. MABBOTT.

October 7th, 1747.

The Committee's proposals were not made binding upon the Admiral but were forwarded to him by the Admiralty as they stood, with instructions that when he had carried out the several services recommended, or as much of them as he found practicable, and was assured that the English settlements were in safety, he was to return to England, leaving behind him such a number of ships as would keep a superiority over the French.



Admiral Boscawen's appointment was a peculiar one, insomuch that he was placed in supreme command both of the naval and military forces, an arrangement which was not improbably the outcome of the unfortunate differences between Vernon and Wentworth. It was a complete departure from precedent, and the only similar case within many years, with the exception of Norris's command on the coast of Galicia in 1740, was that of Peterborough in the reign of Charles II. A further point of curiosity is that Boscawen was junior to Griffin, who already commanded in the East Indies. The only reference to this which occurs in Boscawen's instructions was to the effect that if he met the Commander-in-Chief he was to work with him, but no provision was made whereby Griffin could take command in such circumstances. It is not difficult to imagine how bristling with opportunities such a situation might be.

The force placed under Boscawen's command was the largest that had ever sailed into the East. It consisted of six large ships, a number of East Indiamen, and an army of 1200 men exclusive of the 800 marines of the ships<sup>1</sup>.

The expedition sailed from St Helen's on November 4th, 1747. The foul weather that had so often hindered the departure of larger bodies of ships forced Boscawen to anchor in Torbay after six days beating to windward; a few hours later the wind freed and he weighed again, and arrived at Table Bay on March 29th, 1748. A strong south-easter prevented him from communicating with the shore for some days, but as soon as he could do so he landed his men, and, in addition to exercising the troops, had a number of seamen trained to take their part in the operations on shore. On May 8th the squadron, which had been joined by six Dutch East India ships carrying some 400 troops, weighed and sailed for Mauritius.

The squadron made Mauritius on the morning of June 23rd, and anchored between Pamplemousses River and Tombeau Bay, some five to six miles to the northward of Port Louis.

Owing to the leakage of information regarding the fitting out of the expedition and its objectives, fortifications had been erected at all places where a landing was feasible, and when Boscawen's boats pulled along the shore to reconnoitre they found the defences manned and a reception of grape-shot awaiting them. There were no fewer than eight batteries along the coast, and the sole survivor of d'Albert's

<sup>1</sup> 'Namur,' 74; 'Vigilant,' 64; 'Deptford,' 60; 'Pembroke,' 60; 'Ruby,' 50; 'Chester,' 50; 'Deal Castle,' 24; 'Swallow,' sloop; 'Basilisk,' bomb-vessel; 'Apollo,' hospital ship; and the E.I.C. ships—'Royal George,' 'Royal Duke,' 'Delawar,' 'Chesterfield,' 'Admiral Vernon,' 'Elizabeth,' 'Rhoda,' 'Stretham,' 'Hardwicke,' 'Edgbaston,' 'Fort St George,' 'Lincoln,' 'Durrington' and one other.

squadron, the 'Alcide,' which had arrived only seven days earlier<sup>1</sup>, was moored across the harbour mouth; a fresh southerly wind which was blowing rendered approach difficult. To the southward of Port Louis there was a heavy surf on the reef, so that any attack was a very difficult matter. Landing would have had to be made further to the northward which would have entailed a long overland march through thick country. He held a council of war which decided to land on the night of 24th. This attempt met with no success, and on the following morning the council again sat, and agreed that the attack would cost so many men and require so much time that in view of the importance attached to the larger operations in India it was undesirable to proceed with the undertaking.

The white garrison at Mauritius did not exceed 1000 men and was supplemented by coloured troops, whose fighting value, however, was small. As Boscawen had some 3000 men available, it is possible that if the attempt to land had been pushed home it might have been attended with success. What, however, affected the council's decision as much as anything was lack of information. Neither Boscawen nor his military officers definitely knew the strength of the garrison, nor had they much intelligence about the island itself. Information in this case was a most essential factor, and to embark upon an attack which the Admiral had been told to undertake only if it promised rapid accomplishment and "if it could be done without weakening the forces too much for carrying out the remainder of his plan," would not have been in accordance with his instructions. Boscawen accordingly left Mauritius for the Coromandel coast on June 27th. He anchored at Fort St David's on July 26th, where he found Griffin's squadron lying in the Roads and decided at once to proceed with an attack upon Pondicherry. A competition for the support of the Nawab of Arcot then began. Letters vaunting the strength of their forces were written by both the French and English Commanders, the contradictory nature of the boasts serving only to neutralise their effect in the first instance; but later the Nawab, in his annoyance at the treatment he had received from the French, sent a body of his horse to cooperate with the British.

Every preparation for a stubborn defence had been made at Pondicherry. Since the siege in which it had withstood the Mahrattas the fortress had been greatly strengthened, and when news came of the fitting out of the English expedition, the ground outside the town had been cleared of trees, provisions had been laid in, and Bouvet de

<sup>1</sup> June 13<sup>th</sup>. She was a two-decker, commanded by Captain Kersaint.





- |   |                         |                                 |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A Gouvernement                          | J Porte Marine          | W. Porte Vallouar               |
| B Salle d'Armes et Casernes             | K Batterie Royale       | S Bastion sans peur             |
| C Alliance des vivres                   | L Bastion d'Orléans     | F Porte Ville neuve             |
| D Bazar                                 | M Bastion d'Orléans     | V Bastion la Reine              |
| E Bazar des Indes pour les marchandises | N Bastion d'Agou        | X Bastion l'Hospital            |
| F Porte Royale                          | O Port de Malabar       | Y Porte Vendouar                |
| G Chapelle                              | P Bastion du Nord Ouest | Z Bastion de la Petite Batterie |
| H Porte Dauphine                        | Q Bastion St. Augustin  | 8 Bastion St. Laurent           |

PLAN DE LA VILLE DE PONDICHERY  
 Chevalier de l'Ordre du Roy. Commandeur  
 qui le dessina en 1748 contre l'Amiral Boscawen, et  
 qui avoit mis devant cette Ville avec 6000 Soldats Europeens  
 avant d'aller dans la Place qu'on avoit 2000 Soldats Europeens

Echelle de Quatre  
 100 Toises



L A M E R

DEDIE A LA MEMOIRE DE M<sup>r</sup> DUPLEX  
de l'Ordre Royal et militaire de Saint Louis  
Toulon après la Révolution de France ouverte de lever le Siège  
après d'illustre succès et à sa Paix sans de guerre; R. G. V.  
et sous Capote ou d'illustre succès  
nt Toiles

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>AA Batterie Dauphine<br/>BB Batterie<br/>1 Jardin des Capucins<br/>2 Jardin de Monsieur des Jansens<br/>3 Jardin des Missionnaires<br/>4 Tombeau de l'ouvrier de la Compagnie<br/>Père Bachelier<br/>5 L'Épître</p> | <p>6 Jardin d'ouvriers<br/>7 Jardin des Capucins<br/>8 Jardin des Capucins<br/>9 Jardin<br/>10 Place de la Marche ou ce font la<br/>maison des Nègres<br/>11 Papeete ou Temple des Indes<br/>12 Hôtel de la Compagnie</p> | <p>13 Marché à Poulet<br/>14 Batterie des Canons d'Armes<br/>15 Batterie des Canons d'Artillerie<br/>16 Batterie des Canons de Mitraille<br/>17 Batterie des Canons de Mitraille<br/>18 Batterie des Canons<br/>19 Promenade appelée l'Étoile</p> |
|--|---|---|

ICHERRY



Lozier's opportune arrival had replenished the ammunition and military stores.

Boscawen at once landed his troops and sent ships<sup>1</sup> round to blockade the place by sea. The advance was begun from Fort St David's on August 8th. The first serious resistance was met with at a fort on the south side of the river Ariancoupan, which was attacked early on the 12th by a force of about 700 men. This position, which had been reported by the engineers to be of trivial strength, turned out to be a regular work which could not be carried by assault, and after an attack in which a large number of men were killed and wounded, the British force was obliged to withdraw.

The repulse at Ariancoupan, due largely, as at Cartagena and l'Orient, to the incompetent engineers, greatly delayed the advance. Batteries were now raised against the defences, in which cannon landed from the fleet were mounted; but again, as at Cartagena, they were at first unskilfully placed, and another day was lost before they were moved to a position from whence their fire could be effectual. On August 17th the French made a determined sally from the fort and drove the soldiers from the advanced trenches, making a prisoner, among others of one worth a battalion—Major Stringer Lawrence. The English troops, however, recovered the trenches, and by their subsequent capture of the flanking batteries by the river, the principal fort at Ariancoupan was rendered untenable, and was abandoned by the enemy. The advanced works were now in the hands of the besiegers, the French plan of defence was completely upset, and Dupleix's situation was becoming most critical. The highly excited state of the native population was added to the anxiety of the Governor. Urgent messages were sent to Madras for reinforcements and a company of grenadiers shortly arrived to strengthen him.

Boscawen now transferred his camp to Ariancoupan, and five days later, on August 25th, the army crossed the river. The approach by the Cuddalore Road was reconnoitred, but was found to be very strongly held, and the army marched to the northward in the direction of the village of Oulgaret, rather to the N.W. of the town, to try another line of advance. The defenders moved round to face them, manning the outworks as necessary; but during the next three days they were driven from these, and retired within the walls of the town.

Boscawen now decided, on the advice of the engineers, to make the advance against the N.W. face of the town—a decision involving an approach over a marshy piece of ground in which it was not possible to erect batteries nearer than 800 yards from the walls. A line of trenches

<sup>1</sup> 'Exeter,' 'Chester,' 'Pembroke,' and 'Swallow,' sailed on August 1st and 3rd.

was made, the right of which ended in the stream, and batteries were erected, while at the same time the British bomb-vessel was ordered in to attack the sea face of the town and throw bombs into the town itself. The squadron was warped in as close as possible to assist in the bombardment; but the ships were not able to get near enough to do serious damage.

On the night of August 30th, when the work upon the new trenches was being begun, Dupleix arranged for a sortie, for which he collected 1500 troops near the Madras gate under the command of M. Paradis, his able and energetic engineer, preparing at the same time a feint at the south gate. The troops in the trenches were, however, not to be surprised and the sortie was received with a heavy musketry fire by which many men were killed, among them Paradis himself. The shock and the loss of their leader caused the French to retreat in disorder, and if the repulse had been followed up the whole party might have been destroyed; the opportunity, however, was not seized and the enemy were able to reform and regain the shelter of the fortifications.

Dupleix now contented himself with a passive defence; but he knew that if he could but hold out for another month the breaking of the monsoon would oblige Boscawen to raise the siege. To increase the difficulties of the investing army he inundated the country in which the trenches were being made; and the British troops then found themselves working in water up to their knees; before long fever set in and began to lay them low. The construction of the saps was hindered by the loss of men and by the difficulties of working in the water, so that the approach to the walls progressed very slowly. New batteries were, however, opened and the bombardment of the town was continued both by land and sea, but with little result, and time inexorably wore on. Rain began on the 30th September to add to the difficulties, and with the rain, sickness increased. So bad was the situation that Boscawen came to the conclusion that the capture of the town was impossible, and decided to abandon the attempt. The troops were withdrawn, all serviceable cannon and stores were re-embarked, and the army returned on October 6th to Cuddalore<sup>1</sup>.

This was the last operation of the war. Peace had indeed already been signed before the attack upon Pondicherry began. The clauses

<sup>1</sup> A full description, which is nearly a literal transcript of Boscawen's despatch, is to be found in Beatson's *Naval and Military Memoirs*, vol. 1. A French account, in great detail, is given in the careful study of *Dupleix et la Défense de Pondichéry*, by the Marquis de Nazelle.

Pondicherry was eventually captured on August 22nd, 1793, after a twelve days' siege by an army of 10,000 men of whom 4000 were Europeans—a great contrast to Boscawen's little force.



relating to India restored Madras to England, and left the ownership of all the other settlements unchanged; but the fact that the French had taken the principal British settlement on the Coromandel coast and had repelled the British attack on Dupleix's headquarters left the prestige of France in India far higher than that of Great Britain<sup>1</sup>.

The news of the peace arrived in India a bare seven days after the raising of the siege. The orders to cease hostilities at the same time directed Boscawen to return to England leaving a small force only in East Indian waters for the permanent services of peace.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. vi. p. 538.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WAR IN HOME WATERS AND THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE

THE effect of the battles of Anson and Hawke in May and October, 1747, was to sweep away the dangers that threatened the oversea possessions of the United Kingdom, and to allow of a more effectual pressure being put upon the enemy through the medium of his trade. The French convoy system had shewn itself very vulnerable, and now that two of her powerful squadrons had been destroyed, it was difficult for France to find ships for escort. Merchantmen sailing without convoy found it impossible to get insurance, and the effect was a stoppage of French trade except at such premiums as made seaborne commerce unremunerative, or put the price of goods to such a height that they could not be bought. Moreover the breaking of the enemy's naval strength made it possible to divide the British fleet, and to furnish squadrons on more than one trade route to operate against both French and Spanish commerce. Warren, whom Anson had asked for his opinion in December, 1747, strongly advised the formation of two strong bodies, which should act under one command in order to ensure cooperation if needed, one to cruise off Cadiz and the other off Finis-terre and Ushant. By these means the two principal channels to France and Spain would be under observation and control.

Strenuous efforts had been made in the winter to refit the Western squadron for the new year's campaign. The dockyards had worked hard and all Anson's powerful energies had been put into hastening the completion of the ships. A Dutch squadron of six ships under Admiral Stryver was preparing at the same time<sup>1</sup>, and when the end of January came, 27 ships of the line, 12 frigates and this Dutch squadron were placed under Warren, who, recovered of his illness, was again made Commander-in-Chief.

Cruising had begun earlier. A squadron under Hawke had been working to the westward of Belleisle and one under Mostyn off Cape Clear and Ushant. These formed part of Warren's command and he only awaited the completion of the remainder of his ships for the arranged new distribution to take place. The general rendezvous was "between latitudes 46° 30' and 47° 30', 80 leagues west of Belleisle."

<sup>1</sup> 'Haarlem,' 76; 'De Burgh van Leyden,' 52; 'Leeuwenhorst,' 52; 'Assendelft,' 52; 'Maarsen,' 44; 'Middelburg,' 42.

The distribution during the month of January was as follows:

*General Disposition of the Western Squadron, January, 1748.*

Cruising with Hawke: 'Kent,' 70; 'Culloden,' 74; 'Anson,' 60; 'Augusta,' 60; 'Nottingham,' 60; 'Centurion,' 50; 'Tavistock,' 50; 'Gloucester,' 50; 'Portland,' 50; 'Rainbow,' 40; 'Romney,' 40; 'Surprise,' 24; 'Amazon,' 24.

Cruising with Mostyn: 'Hampton Court,' 64; 'Prince Frederick,' 64; 'Salisbury,' 50; 'Falkland,' 50.

Cruising in Soundings: 'Shoreham,' 24; 'Falcon,' 10.14; 'Viper,' 10.12.

Off Cape Clear "stretching 50 or 60 leagues West of Soundings": 'Anglesea,' 40; 'Bridgewater,' 24; 'Solebay,' 24.

Fitting at Portsmouth: 'Invincible,' 74; 'Intrepide,' 74; 'Devonshire,' 66; 'Yarmouth,' 70; 'Defiance,' 60; 'Scarborough,' 24; 'Vulcan,' fireship; 'Dolphin,' fireship.

Fitting at Plymouth: 'Edinburgh,' 70; 'Monmouth,' 70; 'Princess Louisa,' 60; 'Windsor,' 60; 'Eagle,' 60; 'Advice,' 50; 'Bellona,' 30; 'Ranger,' 30.

Fitting at Chatham: 'Assistance,' 50.

Fitting at Deptford: 'Tyger,' 60; 'St Albans,' 60; 'Queenborough,' 24.

Total—27 of the line, 12 frigates.

Warren's instructions indicate the changed conditions in home waters since the preceding year's victories. Dated January 22nd, 1748, they ordered him to get to sea as soon as possible with as many ships as were ready and join Hawke in his rendezvous to the westward of Belleisle, and thereafter to cruise as necessary with the object of protecting trade and intercepting the enemy's convoys. In addition to this general outline he was given certain specific directions as follows:

- (i) To keep two ships of the line and a frigate cruising from lat. 45° to lat. 43° to fall in with any ships making Finisterre their land fall.
- (ii) To keep two more of the line between lat. 43° and lat. 41½°.
- (iii) To send four of the line, or more if they could be spared, and a frigate, to cruise between Cape Cantin and Cape St Vincent to intercept the Cadiz trade.
- (iv) To station two large frigates (a 50 and a 40) and two sixth rates (24-gun ships) off Cape Clear.

He was also directed to employ the Dutch ships to the northward of Finisterre, as the Dutch were not at war with Spain; and, finally, he was to keep the sea as long as possible, sending ships in to clean as they required it.

Thus, allowing eight ships of the line for the special services above-mentioned, Warren would have, with the Dutch auxiliaries, 25 great ships with which to maintain a principal squadron cruising in the Bay and provide reliefs for the outlying services. This would give him an effective force of about 16 ships, when all those fitting were ready. The French were reported<sup>1</sup> to have only four of the line ready at Brest and two at Rochefort; the Spaniards had a force of six ships at Cadiz, which might be reinforced from the six or eight at Carthage; but the

<sup>1</sup> Intercepted letters. Ad. Sec. 3934. Letter of January 26th, 1748.

exact state of affairs both at Cadiz and Carthagea was not accurately known.

When Warren received his instructions he decided that the detachment ordered to cruise off Cadiz should sail as soon as possible. As the ships fitting at Plymouth were more advanced than those at Portsmouth, he directed Captain Cotes of the 'Edinburgh' to get to sea with a squadron of five ships<sup>1</sup> and cruise in the station ordered between Capes Cantin and St Vincent, where he was to look out for privateers, get touch with Hawke, and use Lagos and Lisbon respectively as his watering and provisioning bases. Two days later definite news came in that there were six men-of-war at Cadiz. As Cotes would be inferior to these, Warren decided as an immediate measure to reinforce him with the 'Eagle' and a frigate, and later, so soon as he himself should have joined Hawke in his station off Belleisle, to readjust the squadron and further increase Cotes's command to eight of the line. This would ensure his having a superiority over the Cadiz squadron.

Warren's principal objectives were now this squadron and the French West Indian trade; in these he saw clearly the two chief props of the enemy's resistance, and he proposed to make the strongest possible efforts to keep every ship at sea until he had disposed of them. The Admiralty concurred with this view, and ordered extra time to be worked assiduously on all the ships of the Western Squadron still under refit. The one element of weakness lay in the lack of frigates. Warren, like his predecessors Anson and Martin, pointed out how great was the need of these for an effective control of the area in which he was operating. "Being fully sensible," he wrote, "of the many services their Lordships may have for frigates, it is with reluctance I mention my wish that more could be spared for the various uses of my command"; to which the Admiralty were only able to reply that they were sorry that the various other services for frigates would not admit of sending him any more—a reply which must have become stereotyped.

Hawke, who had sailed from Plymouth on January 16th for his station off Belleisle, scored a success a bare fortnight later. The French, hoping to give some support to their Commanders in India, had prepared two squadrons of three ships each<sup>2</sup>, sailing from Toulon and Brest, with the object of acting together after arrival at Mauritius and making attacks upon Bombay and Ceylon<sup>3</sup>, thus employing a minor counter-offensive to relieve the pressure upon trade. The Brest squadron under

<sup>1</sup> 'Edinburgh,' 'Princess Louisa,' 'Windsor' and the two 60-gun ships first ready (Orders of January 30th, 1748).

<sup>2</sup> Brest squadron: 'Magnanime,' 'Alcide,' 'Arc-en-Ciel' and 'Duke of Cumberland' (privateer). Toulon squadron: 'Conquérant,' 'Content,' 'Oriflamme.'

<sup>3</sup> *La Marine Militaire de la France sous Louis XV*, G. Lacour-Gayet, p. 218.

the Marquis d'Albert du Chesne sailed on January 12th, four days before Hawke left Plymouth, but meeting bad weather became scattered. The 'Arc-en-Ciel' suffered such damages that she was obliged to return to harbour, the 'Cumberland' put into Coruña, the 'Alcide' got clear away, but the 'Magnanime' fell in with the 'Nottingham,' Captain Saumarez, on January 31st and was taken after a well fought action. The fact that these ships were able to sail without being intercepted, and were frustrated only by bad weather, furnishes an illustration of how impossible it was to ensure that no small bodies of the enemy could go to the outlying colonies; but the French required larger forces than these and a more sustained effort to overthrow the British hold. The combination of a powerful and always present Western Squadron, superior in force to anything the enemy could send out, with sufficient squadrons in the outlying dominions, and defences adequate to prevent the capture of any place by a *coup-de-main*, furnished an ample security for the outer British dominions.

Warren, with his flag on board the 'Devonshire,' sailed on the 5th February with three British ships and the Dutch squadron. He stood down to the rendezvous, capturing on his way a French privateer, from which he learned news that gave him no small concern. Two more men-of-war had arrived in Cadiz on January 30th, escorting eight large merchantmen, and there were now in the port eight<sup>1</sup> men-of-war which were expected to sail with a large merchant fleet about the 10th February—the morrow. Cotes had taken only four ships with him to cruise off St Vincent, and Warren could not be sure whether the two others which had been sent to strengthen him, would by now have joined him. Even if he had the six the strong squadron at Cadiz might overpower him, and in any case his chance of stopping the merchant fleet would be small. The day after receiving this news Warren met Hawke, who had four ships and a heavy frigate<sup>2</sup> with him, and the two Admirals decided to reinforce Cotes at once. Hawke therefore parted company the same day, taking five big ships<sup>3</sup> on this mission, with alternative instructions that if on his arrival he found the Spaniards were already gone, he was to go to Lisbon and collect the English and Dutch Portugal trade and carry it home.

The Western Squadron was now nearly equally divided between Cadiz and the Bay—the distribution recommended in December by Warren which has been referred to earlier. Hawke, when all his ships were joined, would have ten under his command to deal with the eight

<sup>1</sup> Of these eight, four had come from Carthagena on November 14.

<sup>2</sup> 'Kent,' 'Centurion,' 'Augusta,' 'Anson,' 'Tavistock.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Kent,' 'Yarmouth,' 'Defiance,' 'Anson,' and 'Tavistock.'

Spaniards expected from Cadiz, and Warren had nine<sup>1</sup> with which he hoped to intercept the Martinique fleet. Although reports had pointed to the possibility of a fresh French attempt on Canada, Warren felt no fears that it would be made until the Martinique fleet had arrived; any force they could spare would be used to defend this trade, the loss of which at that moment would be the most severe blow that France could suffer. For this reason he urged the Admiralty to send him every possible ship so that he could maintain a squadron sufficient to make certain of destroying this important element of French trade. Throughout the period of Warren's command we find that he advocates the policy of making great endeavours when an important object is in view, and concentrating the whole of the resources of the fleet to the attainment of the desired end. The same policy may be observed in 1755 when the Admiralty attempted to intercept the French squadron going to Louisbourg. The method has both its advantages and its disadvantages. If the enemy is met, an adequate Commander will obtain a crushing success; but if he is missed it is possible that the fleet, the reliefs of which have been disorganised, may be crippled and rendered incapable of further service for some—perhaps a long—time.

In the case of Hawke and l'Étanduère, the Admiralty, acting on Warren's advice, reinforced Hawke sufficiently to leave no doubt of possessing the means of achieving a complete victory; in the case of 1755, when Boscawen missed the French reinforcements, his prolonged cruising in the efforts to intercept them resulted in the disablement of the fleet in home waters for a period in the spring; and, in a measure, this disablement contributed to the loss of Minorca.

Hawke stood down to St Vincent to find Cotes, but saw nothing of him. Off Cape Cantin he met the 'Colchester' and 'Jersey'<sup>2</sup>, whose senior officer, Captain Hardy, was able to corroborate the news Warren had gathered from his French prize. Captain Noel of the 'Severne' had reported that six men-of-war from Carthage had gone into Cadiz some time before to reinforce three ships there and to escort a merchant fleet of 15 sail to the westward. The number of men-of-war was slightly different from that previously reported, and gave the Spaniards nine ships instead of eight, but substantially the information was the same and Hawke therefore remained cruising steadily on the St Vincent—Cape Cantin line. A month passed during which nothing was seen of Cotes, and the next news Hawke had of the Spanish convoy was given him by Captain Jasper of the 'Prince Henry,' who, coming from

<sup>1</sup> Viz. three English and six Dutch ships.

<sup>2</sup> Two ships of the Mediterranean squadron detached in trade protection in the Straits of Gibraltar.

Lisbon, had heard that it was due to leave Cadiz on March 7<sup>th</sup>. For another fortnight Hawke held on, but scurvy and lack of water then drove him into harbour, and on the 28th of March he made for Lagos where he watered. Thence he proceeded to Lisbon to carry out his instructions relating to the convoy of the homeward bound trade. Anchoring there on April 4th he found Cotes lying in the harbour, and learned from him the disappointing news that the Cadiz squadron had sailed, and though the convoy had been attacked by Cotes the bulk of it and all its escort had escaped.

Cotes, when he was detached by Warren, had gone direct to Cape Cantin. He had not been many days in his station when he was rewarded by meeting the Spanish convoy. At daylight on February 7th, the squadron then being about 60 leagues to the N.W. of Cape Cantin and cruising in loose order, the 'Eagle,' Captain Rodney, made the signal for seeing a fleet to the N.W. Cotes at once tacked, shook the third reef out of his topsails, slung his yards, cleared ship for action and made a general signal to chase to windward. After about a couple of hours the 'Inverness' and 'Eagle,' which were ahead, captured two small ships from which it was learned that the chase was the expected Spanish convoy. Shortly afterwards the 'Eagle' signalled that the enemy had nine line of battle ships. On learning this Cotes collected his ships together, and Rodney, on rejoining, hailed him and told him that some of the convoy lay to leeward of the escort. "Whereupon I immediately made the signal and gave chase," says Cotes in his Journal. The 'Eagle,' 'Windsor' and 'Princess Louisa' each took another prize before noon, while the Spanish men-of-war lay to in a line with their heads to the N.W., and made no attempt whatever to attack the small British force. Their defence of the convoy consisted in detaching one ship to the westward with the 29 or 30 merchantmen, while the other eight ships of the line covered their escape and remained passive spectators of Cotes's capture of the stragglers. Sending the two cleanest ships, the 'Eagle' and 'Windsor,' to continue the pursuit, Cotes stood for Lisbon with his prizes, three of which were large and valuable register ships bound for Vera Cruz, and the other two, a ship and a sloop, bound for Cartagena<sup>1</sup>.

The action, if indeed it can be dignified by the name, furnishes an extreme example of the principle of passive defence. The Spanish Admirals, did, it is true, protect the major part of their convoy; but

<sup>1</sup> The forces were as follows: British force: 'Edinburgh,' 70; 'Eagle,' 60; 'Windsor,' 60; 'Princess Louisa,' 60; 'Inverness,' sloop. Spanish force: 'Soberbio,' 74; 'Leon,' 74; 'Colorado,' 70; 'Oriente,' 70; 'Brillante,' 64; 'Pastora,' 64; 'Xavier,' 54; 'Rosario,' 60; 'Galga,' 54.

that they should have permitted an enemy to remain even within sight in such circumstances, without making the smallest attempt to attack him, indicates the depth to which a protective policy of trade defence had reduced the military thought of the Spanish Navy.

Compared to what had been hoped for the British success was inadequate. The dispositions made by Warren had provided for a squadron of ten ships. The failure to effect a junction resulted in two weak squadrons<sup>1</sup> being within the same area, neither of which was strong enough to engage the Cadiz squadron. Their failure to join was an accident of the sea for which no blame is due.

Comparison may be made between Cotes's action on this occasion and that of Mostyn at an earlier date in the war<sup>2</sup>. The forces on each side in the two meetings were as nearly as possible the same—Mostyn with four of the line and a frigate sighted what he took to be eight of the line escorting an East India fleet; Cotes with four of the line and a frigate sighted nine of the line escorting a Cadiz fleet. Mostyn called a council of war which decided not to attack. Cotes called no council of war, but attacked the convoy with vigour. The odds against Cotes were far greater, for the escorting squadron in his case consisted of nine men-of-war while in the case of Mostyn the escort was only three men-of-war, three armed East Indiamen and two corvettes. If Mostyn, like Cotes, had sailed boldly in, it is possible that a similar success, or an even greater one—the capture of the men-of-war themselves—might have been his reward; though it is certainly to be doubted whether the squadron under Saint-Georges, which shewed such admirable fighting qualities on May 3rd, would have contented itself with the supine attitude of the Spanish escort. The point is, however, that Mostyn did not make the attempt. The council of war decided against the attack, and the episode furnishes another witness to the well-known dictum that councils of war will not fight. Duguay-Trouin had written many years earlier

“I have observed that the result of nearly all the councils (of war) that have been held in the fleet, has been to choose the least honourable and the least advantageous course. I shall therefore die fully persuaded that on those occasions when the danger is great and success uncertain it is the duty of the Commander to make the decision without assembling any Council and to take the risk of the outcome, good or bad, upon himself. Otherwise, human nature which shrinks from destruction imperceptibly suggests to the majority of the councillors, so many plausible reasons as to mishaps to be feared that the result is always not to fight because the majority carries the vote<sup>3</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> Cotes should have had six ships and Hawke was ordered to join him with four more.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 79 ante.

<sup>3</sup> Troude, *Batailles navales*.



Later experience has borne out only too well the truth of these remarks. There appears to be some overwhelming tendency in a consulting body to see a difficulty and not see the means of getting over it. The individual members of Mostyn's council were men of undoubted personal courage—Mountagu's behaviour in Anson's action<sup>1</sup> on May 3rd bears witness to his almost reckless bravery; John Byron's adventures are well known and Barradell and Mackenzie have no shadow on their names. Mostyn himself has a less clear record; but it is not to be believed that men like "Mad Mountagu" or Byron failed to advise closing the enemy for any ignoble reason, any more than did Byng's advisers off Mahon in 1756. Some form of corporate shyness induced by the council of war alone can account for these phenomena, a shyness affecting decisions of ministers ashore as well as those of officers afloat.

After the meeting with Hawke in the Tagus Cotes was sent back to his station off St Vincent to look out for some trade expected at Cadiz; and Hawke, after a three weeks stay at Lisbon<sup>2</sup>, went to join Warren, who was now off Finisterre. For over a month after Hawke had parted company from him on February 10th, Warren had kept his station in the latitude of Belleisle Bay, looking out for the Martinique fleet. But in the middle of March his attention was drawn to another objective, and one of greater importance. The 'Assurance,' Captain Jelfe, brought him news, gathered from a Portuguese source, that four French ships of the line were fitting out at Coruña, and were to be joined by twenty more ships, forming an expedition to Canada. In view of this, the capture of the merchant fleet sank into insignificance and Warren whipped in all the ships he could and moved up to Finisterre to prevent the junction from being made. But at the end of the month, damage to his rudder and the need for refreshment and repair of some of his ships sent him into harbour; he returned to Spithead with eight ships, four of which were Dutch, the latter in a very bad state, and anchored there on April 4th.

On arrival in England he found that everything pointed towards the resumption of French efforts against Canada, thus confirming the information he had had at sea. Twelve sail of transports armed *en flûte* were reported to be fitting out at Brest, Rochefort and Marseilles, and an escort of three more men-of-war at Brest; all these were to rendezvous, said the report, at Ferrol. The news that Cotes had engaged the Cadiz

<sup>1</sup> "Not finding room enough... Captain Fincher hailed the Bristol and requested Captain Montagu to put his helm astarboard, or the Pembroke would run foul of his ship; to this Captain Montagu replied "Run foul of me, and be d—d; neither you nor any man in the world shall come between me and my enemy." Beatson, *Naval and Military Memoirs*, vol. I. p. 358. See also Charnock, *Bio. Nav.* for notes on his character; also *Naval Chronicle*.

<sup>2</sup> Sailed from Lisbon April 23rd, 1748.

squadron reached Plymouth on April 2nd, and it was further stated that some of the ships that left Cadiz were to return to Ferrol, which seemed to be the pivot of the enemy's operations<sup>1</sup>. Warren therefore wrote and suggested that both Cotes and Hawke should be instructed to join him off Finisterre, "where we could concert measures either for acting together or dividing our strength to look out for both enemies." But in the meantime, while he was at Spithead, Brest could not be left unwatched, and Warren ordered Mostyn to get to sea at once (April 5th) with six ships<sup>2</sup> and join Harland who was cruising off Brest. The joint squadrons were to watch Brest and Rochefort until Warren could get to sea again; in case of missing Harland off Brest, Warren gave Mostyn a rendezvous 8 to 15 leagues N.W. of Finisterre.

Mostyn sailed next day, and with him went all the ships that were fit for sea. On Warren reporting to the Admiralty what he had done his letter was minuted: "Their Lordships very much approve the disposition he hath made of the ships, and I heartily wish him all imaginable success," and, shewing that the need of rapid movement was realized, they directed him not to encumber himself with any trade. Warren remained in harbour no longer than was necessary for his repairs. After nine days he was at sea again, taking with him the ships he had brought in and three more which he found ready at Plymouth<sup>3</sup> three days later. His frigates looked into Brest on the 17th and found one ship only there, while Basque Roads were empty. Warren waited off Brest until the 22nd April in hopes of meeting Mostyn, but seeing nothing of him proceeded down to Finisterre, with cruisers out stretching across the Bay. His main object now was to prevent the French and Spaniards effecting a junction at Coruña. Until he had certain news of the intentions of the enemy he intended to keep his squadron together in order to deal with whatever situation might arise; the Martinique fleet, so long expected but not yet arrived, must be left to such frigates and small craft as he could spare: important as it was it could not compare with the united fighting forces of the enemy.

More news of the intended concentration at Coruña soon reached him from the Duke of Newcastle. On the day Warren sailed from Portsmouth (April 13th) a letter was received from Mr Parker, our Consul at Oporto, in which that gentleman reported that the Captain-General of the Province at Coruña had been ordered to supply a French squadron of six ships, soon expected there, with all they required, and

<sup>1</sup> In letters. April 4th, 1748.

<sup>2</sup> 'Hampton Court,' 'Tyger,' 'St Albans,' 'Intrepide,' 'Salisbury,' 'Assistance.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Gloucester,' 'Amazon,' 'Falcon'; joined on April 16th.

that the French Consul was preparing provisions for them on arrival. He added that six ships of the Spanish squadron, which had sailed from Cadiz—that is to say, those which Cotes had engaged—were returning from the Canaries to Ferrol, where two Spanish ships already lay; and besides these some three or four French ships were expected at Ferrol from Brest, and also a Swedish squadron of 12 sail which the French had acquired. Altogether it appeared that a great concentration of 30 sail was in the making.

This news reached Warren in the second week of May. Mostyn and Harland had joined him on the 6th with six ships<sup>1</sup> so that he had 14 heavy ships in company. He at once detached the 'Portland,' 'Scarborough' and 'Falmouth' packet to Coruña and Ferrol to get information, and hurried to Finisterre, where he met Hawke<sup>2</sup> on the 12th. Hawke was able to tell him that the six Spaniards had returned to Cadiz and not to Ferrol, and that Cotes with four ships had also gone in the same direction to stop three French ships which had put in to the port. For the present the northern harbours of Spain were empty, and the question before Warren was, which was the best station to take in order to prevent the anticipated concentration? So far as his information went the bulk of the enemy would be coming from the north, from Brest and Sweden. Although reports gave Ferrol as the point of concentration they were not necessarily correct, and therefore the place nearest to a known point of departure and close to a certain line of passage appeared to be the best situation to ensure falling in with a portion of the enemy. Warren, therefore, decided to take the whole force to a rendezvous eight to 15 leagues to the W. by S. of Ushant<sup>3</sup>, and at the same time wrote to the Admiralty expressing the hope that a good lookout would be kept in the north for the Swedes and timely notice of their sailing or being sighted should be sent him<sup>4</sup>.

Warren had barely arrived in his station when a despatch reached him, dated May 7th, telling him that hostilities with France were to cease, and that he was to blockade the coast of Spain. He at once broke up his squadron, reinforcing Cotes with five ships<sup>5</sup>, and proceeded with the remainder of the heavy ships to the Canary Islands to cruise

<sup>1</sup> 'Hampton Court,' 'Tyger,' 'St Albans,' 'Intrepide,' 'Assistance,' 'Augusta.'

<sup>2</sup> Hawke had 'Kent,' 'Anson,' 'Tavistock' and 'Amazon' only in company.

<sup>3</sup> In letters. Warren. May 16th, 1748.

<sup>4</sup> The ships available at this moment furnishes an example of the need of numbers. Warren had 27 of the line under his orders. Of these four had been detached with Cotes off Cadiz, and he had 15 in company. Eight ships were absent for refit and other causes.

<sup>5</sup> 'Salisbury,' 'Bristol,' 'Romney,' 'Intrepide,' 'Assurance.'

in that important area on the track of the Spanish trade. His small craft of lesser frigates he made up into small squadrons to cruise in stations off Finisterre, Ferrol and the Bayona Islands.

The main squadron reached Palma on June 5th, and although for rather over a month Warren cruised assiduously, hardly a Spanish ship was seen. The sea had been as effectually cleared of Spanish as of French trade, and Spain was fully as ready as her ally for peace. It was not long in coming. In the middle of July orders to cease hostilities with Spain reached Warren, dated July 1st, and on the 23rd of the same month his squadron was proceeding past the Bill of Portland on its way to its home ports, to drop back into ordinary<sup>1</sup>.

After nine years of war, peace had at last come.

Early in 1748 anxiety to end the war had begun to be manifest on the part of all the powers engaged with the exception of Austria. From the allies' point of view the outlook on the continent was dark. The French had captured the whole of Flanders; Dutch Brabant and the great fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom were in their hands, Maastricht was threatened and there appeared every possibility that a new campaign would place them in occupation of a considerable part of the United Provinces. The allies had been repelled in their invasion of Provence, and they were on the defensive in Italy. Another advance, it is true, was in contemplation, but much time must pass before it could be begun; at the same time there were prospects that the situation in Flanders might be improved, for the Queen of Hungary had obtained the promise of Russian help; but whether the help could arrive before the United Provinces were overrun and forced to make a separate peace was questionable. The hope that the Russians would arrive made the Queen of Hungary as intransigent as she had been throughout the war; nothing would content her but the recovery of all her dominions.

But although Louis XV had made great conquests of territory and was apparently in a position to extend them still further, and though the allied Bourbon armies still occupied strong frontiers in Italy, France had not won the war. Economically she was in grave straits. The victories of Anson and Hawke in home waters, the successful operations of Pocock in the West Indies, and the blockade of the Coromandel coast by Griffin had shattered her commerce, industry and finance. Famine stalked through the land and manufactures of silk, woollen and linen goods on which her export trade mainly rested were idle for want of the necessary materials. And there was no remedy so long as the war continued. Oversea trade was stopped, because the battles at sea had destroyed the men-of-war and convoy became

<sup>1</sup> Ships "in ordinary" were those which today we should call "in reserve."

impossible, so that any ships sailing became victims to the British cruisers and privateers. So diminished was French and Spanish shipping that, as Anson remarked<sup>1</sup>, Mostyn in a three months' cruise in the Bay "had seen but one insignificant vessel of the enemies for the last ten weeks." "If the war had continued another year," said Lord Bathurst, "and we had taken care to prevent their getting in any considerable quantity of provisions, like the people of Egypt to Pharaoh, they must have sold themselves to us for bread<sup>2</sup>."

The loss of her fighting ships exposed France to still further disasters. The rich West Indian islands, more productive than the British and one of her great sources of wealth, were now open to capture. Already Martinique was blockaded and only continued to exist on the precarious supplies brought in by single blockade runners from the Dutch and other centres. Great Britain had her choice which of these many valuable colonies she should attack. Louisbourg was ready to serve as the advanced base of an expedition against Canada. Boscawen with his formidable force had gone to India where the British held complete command at sea. France was thus faced with internal ruin and the loss of all those outer possessions which could help her to retrieve her position when peace should come. The problem with which she was faced was whether she could conquer Holland, detach her from the Alliance, and obtain supplies before her own disastrous condition obliged her to make peace; and even so, whether the conquest of Holland would save her. There were those who thought France could continue fighting. Sir Peter Warren, admitting the misery in which she found herself, considered that so long as there was bread in the country and supplies for the army she could continue to fight. Horace Walpole even thought that she was not seriously distressed, and that the real reasons for peace lay in the pacific sentiments of Louis XV, influenced by the teaching of Fleury. The French king's benevolence was however remarkably tardy in shewing itself; a bloody war had to devastate Europe for eight years before he perceived the injury that Europe was suffering. His appreciation of the sorrows of the peoples of the continent coincided with the destruction of the sources of that wealth which was essential to him for the prosecution of the war.

Still France might have continued the struggle. Her claims were high; success in Holland, followed as it would be by the occupation of the Hague, would set them higher still. D'Argenson, so late as March, 1748, was demanding the cession of Tuscany<sup>3</sup>, and as our statesmen

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xiv. p. 702.

<sup>2</sup> February 23rd, 1747. Letter to Lord Sandwich. Sandwich Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Newcastle to Sandwich, March 29th, 1745. Sandwich Papers.

deemed probable that she would ask for some part of the Barrier and Luxembourg there is no wonder that the British cabinet debated whether it were not wise to make peace while they could, before things became worse.

The burdens upon England in the maintenance not only of her naval and military forces, but also in the subsidies she paid to her allies were so heavy, that Newcastle feared that she would be unable to continue the struggle. "The efforts that have been made in this war (particularly the last year, amounting to eleven millions) are so great that his Majesty despairs of being able to provide anything like that sum for another year. . . . Could a peace be had upon the foot of mutual restitution of conquests on all sides (Finale being in that case to be retained by the King of Sardinia) his Majesty thinks it ought to be immediately accepted<sup>1</sup>." The national debt now reached 76 millions, an increase of 23 millions in the last five years, which was looked on with grave apprehensions by the mercantile community.

Thus on both sides there were elements favouring a conclusion of hostilities by reason of mutual exhaustion. Anson himself was in favour of peace. The allies could not, in his opinion, procure an army superior to that of France, the King of Prussia could not be depended upon to stand by the peace he had made with the Queen of Hungary, and the Russians might not arrive in time to be of service in this year's campaign; nothing, therefore, but a war of attrition was to be looked for<sup>2</sup>, a war in which England had much to lose and nothing to gain; for she had already achieved the main purpose for which she entered the war, the continuance of the Hapsburg succession and the prevention of the break up of the Austrian Empire. The question of a separate peace with Spain, which had been already under discussion in January, was dropped, and negotiations with France were begun in February, Lord Sandwich being appointed as the British plenipotentiary.

By virtue of their territorial conquests, the Bourbon Powers were prepared to claim most favourable terms. Spain at once demanded Minorca and Gibraltar, her ambassador having instructions to insist upon the latter. She even attempted to make a separate and secret peace with England, on the basis of an exchange of Gibraltar for a Spanish guarantee of Cape Breton to England. The acceptance of this impudent proposal was urged by Sandwich<sup>3</sup>, but was uncompromisingly refused by Newcastle, who, whatever may have been his faults in administration, was no stranger to the importance of our maritime

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Sandwich. An outline of conduct to be observed in his negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle. Sandwich Papers. Letters from Secretary of State, vol. vi.

<sup>2</sup> Anson to Sandwich, February 23rd, 1748. Sandwich Papers.

<sup>3</sup> Sandwich to Duke of Bedford, March 16th, 1748. Bedford Papers.

interests in Europe and had no illusions as to the value of treaty guarantees. The various continental Powers, including Spain, had given too evident a proof of the lightness with which they disregarded their signatures for Great Britain to abandon the substance of a fortress for the shadow of a promise. The tardiness of Spanish help is a proverb even in the language of Castile. "Gibraltar and Port Mahon," replied the Duke to this recommendation of Sandwich, "cannot be yielded. How shall you or I pass our time who are known to be so much for the trade and commerce and maritime interests of this country, if we give up upon any account our maritime possessions in the Mediterranean?"<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Bedford was also for giving up Gibraltar, "for which I doubt not valuable concessions in trade might be obtained in the West Indies. I must own that place seems to me to be of very little or no utility to this country and that the cession of it to Spain would not be near so dangerous as that of Louisbourg to the French."<sup>2</sup>

To Spain's demands for an establishment in Italy for Don Philip there was less opposition by the British ministry, but a strong and persistent one by Austria, who clamoured for compensations if such a cession were to be made; and unless Austrian desires could be satisfied, the Queen of Hungary insisted upon continuing the war. The allies, however, had nothing to bargain with except Cape Breton. Austria had conquered nothing, Holland had not even been able to defend herself, and England alone had made the solitary conquest of Louisbourg; this she was ready to return to France in exchange for the restoration of the Netherlands to Austria, in order to bring about a peace. Kaunitz, to whom the magnitude of the sacrifice which England was prepared to make for Austria was pointed out, replied that it was one of which the effect was more favourable to England herself than to Austria, in that England was so interested in the restitution of the Low Countries that it was in reality a transaction in favour of England; and that it conferred no exceptional benefit on Austria. In the first statement there was an undoubted measure of truth; the security of England was held to depend upon the Low Countries not being in the hands of France. The second, that the restitution was of such slight importance to Austria, was a diplomatic fiction; and England was disinclined to continue interminably a struggle which had already added twenty millions to the national debt, purely for the sake of preserving every square mile of Austrian territory to the Queen of Hungary. The war had been entered upon to save the House of Austria from ruin. This had been

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Newcastle to Lord Sandwich, March 6th, 1747. Sandwich Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Bedford Papers.

effected; and England was now prepared to make a sacrifice, and a considerable sacrifice, by the cession of a fortress so greatly affecting the security of her northern colonies in order to recover one part of the conquered Austrian possessions. It is true that the cession of Cape Breton was not looked upon by all persons as important. To Lord Sandwich it seemed a marketable asset, useless in itself without Quebec or Canada, involving "immense expense" for its maintenance, and therefore much better used in purchasing better conditions of peace with France; but Lord Sandwich's attitude, as illustrated in his eager readiness to cede Minorca and Gibraltar to Spain and by other evidences, shew him to have been so anxious for peace that his desires overrode his judgment and his arguments became those of the special pleader rather than of the statesman. The colonial point of view does not appear to have received any consideration. This perhaps was natural in the days of a policy which subordinated colonial interests so wholly to those of the United Kingdom, but it shews a defect in the imagination of the statesmen that they were unable to foresee, or perhaps to care about, the bitter indignation which would be aroused in the American colonies, and in particular in Massachusetts, by the arbitrary disposal of a conquest made by colonial troops and affecting so intimately colonial security both on land and sea.

Newcastle at least desired to retain Cape Breton if by any possible means a peace which would leave us in security could be obtained without giving it up. He set a high value upon its importance from a naval point of view, and insisted that Lord Sandwich should make this clear to the Austrian plenipotentiary. The Duke's reply to Sandwich's arguments in favour of retaining the place deserves quotation at length.

"His Majesty is sensible that the cession of Cape Breton is infinitely more material than any that is proposed to be made by his Allies (of which you will make the Ministers sensible, and of which his Majesty makes a sacrifice, in some measure, for their interests) and though the King has done his best endeavours to retain it, yet the circumstances of the war are such, the weakness and total inability of the allies so great, that this nation is no longer able to bear almost the whole burthen; and therefore the King must give up those advantages (which if the Allies had acted as his Majesty has done, he might have retained) for the sake of restoring peace to his subjects; easing them of their burthens, procuring a restitution of the Low Countries, an immediate relief to the Republic of Holland, and a tolerable settlement of Europe, which by a most perfect and well-concerted union between the present allies and such other powers who may also dread the growing power of France, and by proper measures after the conclusion of the peace, may still secure the liberties of Europe and preserve them from being overturned by that Power, which will always have it in view, though, from the great success of his Majesty's naval operations, their trade, commerce, and marine have suffered so greatly that it is to be hoped that they will not have it so soon in their power to effect it<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Sandwich, March 29th, 1748. Sandwich Papers.



To the Dutch, whose minister objected that the interests of the United Provinces had not been sufficiently considered, a similar argument was used. "I think. . . it can never be said with reason that the interests of his sovereign have been neglected when his Majesty has sacrificed a most valuable conquest singly with a view of procuring the restitution of the Low Countries, which are given back entire without the loss of a single town or district<sup>1</sup>." That there was an actual measure of disinterestedness in England's action, although the recovery of the Low Countries was a point which regarded her very closely, was admitted by the French themselves. Sandwich wrote in April that the cession of Cape Breton had all along been considered as a full equivalent for the Low Countries, and that M. Saint Severin had told him "that if we would leave France in possession of Flanders, or even of a part of it, he would willingly agree to our remaining in possession of Louisbourg, and that our giving up that acquisition was consequently a proof that we considered the good of the whole system of the alliance preferable to an immediate advantage to ourselves<sup>2</sup>."

Although the language of sacrifice was used at the conference, a different note had to be adopted in defending the cession in Parliament. Henry Pelham, speaking for the Government, went so far as to describe Cape Breton as "of no manner of consequence to us," and to say that its restoration was purely for our own benefit.

"Let us consider, Sir," he said, "that the large and extensive conquests made by France and Spain were all, except Madras, upon the continent of Europe, whereas neither we nor our allies had made any conquests except Cape Breton in America, which was of no manner of consequence to us but of so great importance to France that in order to have it restored she offered to restore the whole of what she had conquered in the Austrian Netherlands and in Dutch Flanders and Brabant. . . Will any gentleman say that it was not more for the interest of this nation to restore to France the possession of Cape Breton than to leave her in possession of Hainault, Flanders, Brabant and Namur, and consequently of the whole coast from Zealand to the westernmost part of Bretagne. . . Our restoring of Cape Breton upon this consideration was for the interest of England, without any regard to our allies, or to the balance of power in Europe. . . Madras was of so little moment that we might safely depend upon a solemn engagement, especially as we had there a superior force in the East Indies and had reason to believe that we should soon have retaken Madras and made ourselves masters of the French settlements in that part of the world<sup>3</sup>."

After the necessary allowances for diplomatic and political exigences have been made the truth seems to lie between the two extremes. The cession of Cape Breton was a blow to national pride; its retention, though not of an immediate necessity to the security

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle to Sandwich, May 5th, 1748. Sandwich Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Sandwich to Newcastle, April 12th, 1748. Sandwich Papers.

<sup>3</sup> "Debate upon the Port and Harbour of Dunkirk." *Parliamentary History*, vol. XIV. p. 684.

of England, was of great importance, morally and materially, to the Empire. In Europe it was undoubtedly to the advantage of Austria and Holland to regain possession of the territories which they had been unable to defend themselves. They regained them at the cost of England, for whose security it was essential that France should not possess Flanders, and to achieve this security, as no sacrifices were to be obtained from her allies, England had to give up Cape Breton. But both selfishness and altruism, whichever view may be taken, were merged in the desire to bring an end to the war. For the English statesmen of the time it was primarily a question of whether British financial resources would stand another one, two or more years of war, or whether famine and commercial distress would first bring about a crumbling of the social structure of France. Much as was made of the heavy British burden during the negotiations, it is pertinent to remark that Lord Sandwich, who proved ardent in the pursuit of peace when he arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle, had expressed the opinion earlier that there were grave dangers to be feared in a premature cessation of the war. "The great load of expense upon this country," he wrote, "is a serious proposition; but whither had the same reasoning led this country upon a former occasion? The ministry that made the treaty of Utrecht used the same argument in their favour; but Posterity that has suffered by those measures has, as we are all witnesses, by no means absolved the administration, and I think a very little close observation will show us that fatal transaction has been the foundation of most of the troubles that have happened for this last century<sup>1</sup>." It is indeed tempting to consider whether bearing the burden of this war a little longer might not have prevented the imposition of the additional expense of the Seven Years' War; for the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle proved to be a truce only.

The terms of the peace were wholly unsatisfactory to all the powers engaged, and if the object of war is, as de Crissé expressed it, to obtain a lasting peace, this object was not attained. France failed in crushing Austria and was obliged to give up all of the territory she had conquered in the Low Countries, and to return Madras; she also suffered the most serious losses to her commerce. Austria, who had lost Silesia to Prussia, was unable to prevent a further diminution in her Italian possessions, and had to submit to Parma and Piacenza being ceded to Don Philip. Spain gained that slight compensation at the prodigious cost of a war in which her national interests were in no way advanced, and at the end of which her much desired fortresses of Gibraltar and Minorca remained in the hands of

<sup>1</sup> Sandwich to Anson, February 3rd, 1748. B.M. Add. MS. 15957 f. 43.

England. Sardinia recovered Nice, Savoy and a strip of Lombardy, but did not obtain Finale; she still remained a weak power between the hammer and anvil of the Bourbons and Hapsburgs, her neighbours. Holland received nothing; and England, who had originally gone to war with Spain on a matter of free navigation in the West Indies, had to be content with that matter not being even referred to, and to see her one conquest restored to France as the price of peace. The territorial boundaries were left to all intents as they had been before the war.

The part played by the Navy between 1739 and 1748 may now be briefly reviewed.

In the preliminary war with Spain, British strategy aimed at crippling that country by destroying the source of her strength—her trade with America. In the second phase of the struggle, in which France had joined Spain against us, the great problem which the ministry had to face was how to prevent France from dominating Europe. The policy adopted was to preserve the balance of power by supporting the Hapsburg succession. It has been shewn earlier<sup>1</sup> that two schools of thought existed as to the most effective manner in which Great Britain could apply her strength: one, to conduct a war principally at sea against the trade and the American colonies, and the other to make a great military effort on the continent; and that the method chosen was a compromise between the two views. An army, never of great strength, supported our allies in Flanders and was therefore not available for colonial campaigns. To the Navy fell the multifarious duties connected with the control of sea-communications.

In exercising this control, the fleet was called upon to carry an army to Flanders and maintain it there; to assist, when needed, in transporting the troops of our allies in the Mediterranean and cooperate with them tactically when conditions admitted; to deny the enemy the use of the sea for his army; to bring pressure upon the enemy by cutting off his oversea commerce, and upon neutrals like Genoa, the Papal States, and Massa, by threats of similar treatment; and finally, to transport troops to attack the colonies or naval bases of the enemy. Defensively, it had to protect the kingdom, the trade and the colonies.

The transport of troops from the Thames to Willemstadt and Flushing though threatened from Dunkirk was never endangered, and this function was performed without difficulty and at small expenditure of strength by a service of convoy. No attempt appears to have been made by the enemy to interrupt these communications.

The transport by sea of the troops of our allies in the Mediterranean

<sup>1</sup> Introduction, vol. I.

was conducted successfully whenever called for, though, owing to rapid changes of situation and slowness of movement, occasions arose when escorts could not be furnished soon enough to obtain the full benefit of sea command. Tactical support to the allied armies was afforded by the many means open to the naval arm—direct bombardment of troops passing along roads fringing the sea (Riviera, 1744–1748), embarkation of troops in retreat (1744) or advancing (1747), occupation of water routes (Scheldt, Riviera, Adriatic), tactical diversions (Velletri, 1744), and major diversions (Martin at Naples, 1744, l’Orient, 1746). Although at times the enemy were able to use the inshore waters along the Riviera to carry reinforcements and supplies, his sea passage was always precarious. While it is not possible to say that the fullest advantage was derived from our strength at sea in the Mediterranean, yet its weight influenced the whole course of the Italian campaign. After the first unfortunate miscarriages of 1741 the enemy could never rely upon being able to use the sea except in furtive and therefore small enterprises; the allies from that time onwards could depend upon safe transit. Therein lay the outward and visible expression of command of the sea; one alliance could use the sea, the other could not.

Command of the sea permitted British military expeditions to be carried to the coast of France, across the Atlantic, and to India to act against colonial or other stations of the enemy—Cartagena, Santiago, Panama, Louisbourg, La Guayra, Caraccas, l’Orient, Pondicherry. It is true that one only of these expeditions—that against Louisbourg—was successful, but this does not prejudice the strategy of which they are the expression.

In the West Indies, the French islands were reduced to such distress that unless peace had come when it did they must have surrendered from sheer lack of food<sup>1</sup>. As it was, their provisioning was dependent principally on Dutch and Danish ships, aided by occasional French vessels which sometimes succeeded in getting through the cordon at home only to be blocked at the entrances to the ports. “The island [Martinique] is perpetually invested by British ships of war,” wrote Caylus on 7th Jan. 1748, “which intercept all our trade, and are now preventing twenty of our merchant ships, which are anchored to windward of the island, from getting into the ports to which they are destined.” At the same time, the British ships had established such an ascendancy, and cruised with such energy, in the focal points, that the French privateers could do nothing and British trade was secured. “Although our privateers number no less than twenty four,” wrote de Poinable on May 15th, 1748, “they have been unable to do anything.

<sup>1</sup> Caylus to Maurepas, 7th Jan. 1745. *Archives de la Marine*.

For more than four months our enemies have several New England privateers, as well as two frigates, all infinitely stronger than our vessels, constantly working in these waters. They have driven ours from their cruising grounds and captured two of them—one which came from the Spanish coast and another fitted out in this port<sup>1</sup>." Merchants bringing out supplies ran such risks that Caylus suggested that a squadron of four ships of the line should precede the supply convoys by a fortnight, sweep up the privateers, and make a clear passage for the merchants—a recognition of the limitations of the convoy system and of the value of offensive action<sup>2</sup>. But the victories of May and October 1747 had put us in a position to make even this difficult, for the Western Squadron could then be broken up into numerous detachments, and all the exits and lines of passage from France kept under observation by superior forces.

To what extent the naval war against commerce was a means of bringing France to a peace, and whether such form of war is productive of decisive results, is of particular importance. The French trade was destroyed. The effect can only be measured if the importance of that trade to the national life of France be known.

The overseas trade was in four great categories, the West Indian, East Indian, African and Levant; to which may be added the great fishing industry of Canada. This last, which, with its headquarters at Louisbourg had a value of over £980,000 sterling<sup>3</sup>, depended wholly upon the possession of Cape Breton Island, and disappeared with its loss.

Mere statistics of the number of ships captured by each antagonist furnish no proof of the effectiveness of the war against commerce. The British are said to have lost 3238, the enemy 3434, leaving a balance of 196 ships and a value of two millions sterling in Britain's favour<sup>4</sup>. Thus, what amounts to a net enemy loss of some two hundred ships and their cargoes took place. If these losses and captures be assumed to be approximately equally divided between the two allies the net French loss would amount to about one-eighth of their mercantile marine<sup>5</sup>—a loss insufficient wholly to cripple a healthy oversea trade. But the shipping which remained was useless, as it could not sail. Therein lay

<sup>1</sup> *Archives de la Marine*.

<sup>2</sup> Cypher despatch from de Caylus. Jan. 7th, 1748.

<sup>3</sup> Macpherson, *Annals of Commerce*, vol. III. p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> The Lloyd's lists for this period are unfortunately burnt so that complete accuracy is unattainable.

<sup>5</sup> An estimate of 1738 puts the merchant fleet of France at "not above 800 sail of all sizes" (S.P. Miscellaneous, 500). The largest French trade—that to the West Indies—is said by M. Sautai to employ from 700 to 800 sail (*Préliminaires de la guerre de la succession d'Autriche*).

the decisive measure of the British success at sea. British trade continued, its losses a fraction only of the whole body; French and Spanish trade could not be carried in safety, and accordingly ceased.

Before the war, France had a revenue of about 200 million francs, which exceeded her expenses by some two millions<sup>1</sup>. This revenue was largely contributed by her flourishing external commerce, of which the principal part was carried by sea. The whole of this commerce had disappeared by the end of the war.

The East India Company's trade was first hit by the loss of Louisbourg, its port of call homeward, in 1745; and further restricted during 1747, when the British West Indian squadron established a nearly effective blockade of Martinique, the alternative port. Griffin's operations did not bear fruit till 1747; and it may be said that the effect of the sea pressure on the East Indian trade was not gravely felt until that year.

In the Levant, trade pressure was never seriously exercised. No real measures of blockade were instituted, and although spasmodic attempts were made to intercept the French ships trading between Marseilles and the East, the commerce was little interrupted and French merchant fleets were continually successful in evading capture. The reason for this was that the military operations in these parts were of primary importance, the defence of British trade was next; and these two functions so fully absorbed the attention of the available squadrons that an additional blockade of Marseilles—the only measure which could effectually interrupt the trade—was not practicable.

When therefore we try to estimate the result, and to draw conclusions as to the efficacy of this form of warfare, we must be careful to take full account of the conditions under which it was conducted. In this war the naval measures did not really become effective until the end of 1747, when trade attack was based upon a strategical conception, represented by a strong Western Squadron.

What part then, had the stoppage of imports and exports in bringing Louis XV to a peace? We have seen the conditions in France—trade at a standstill, money lacking and dear, people famished. Of these, the first two arose directly out of the war and were mainly due to the naval effort. The third was not wholly a result of sea pressure. In 1740, before the war began, although commerce was flourishing, and those who took part in it—merchants, shippers, and manufacturers—were amassing fortunes, the state of the peasantry was terrible. Crushed under the burden of the "taille"—a tax from which the nobles were exempt—and suffering from a succession of bad har-

<sup>1</sup> Revenue in 1740—203,096,500 francs. Expenses—201,213,912 francs.

vests, the people were even then starving. The population of France, which in the beginning of the century had reached 19 millions, had fallen by 1740 to between 17 and 18 millions. In May, 1739, d'Argenson wrote in his Journal: "The misery in the Kingdom during the last year has increased to an unheard-of degree. Men die like flies from sheer poverty, eating the herbs of the field<sup>1</sup>"; and a year later, "Misery is exhausting the Kingdom; the dearth this year is worse than that of last. The provinces of Picardy and Soissons, our granary of a twelve-month ago, are this year short of supplies. Death is decimating our people. The country is one vast hospital; there is less money than there was last year—that is to say, none at all<sup>1</sup>."

If, then, in 1748 there were starvation and wretchedness, these conditions cannot be attributed wholly to the cutting off of commerce; weighed down with such disabilities from the beginning of the war, France had nevertheless been able to fight for eight years. Bad harvests and poverty were the initial cause of the distress; and external operations against the trade of a normally self-supporting people, though they hit the manufacturing classes, would not deeply affect the peasantry, or bring about the sheer *misère* which the country people suffered. But the cutting off of the sea-borne commerce precluded at the same time any possibilities of obtaining relief. Thus the sea played its part in producing and maintaining a state of affairs in France in which continued resistance was most difficult, if indeed not impossible.

In the case of Spain, it had long been a doctrine that her strength depended upon the wealth she drew from America. The products of the mines of Mexico and Peru served to support her heterogeneous bodies of mercenaries and to corrupt the courtiers in the capitals of Europe. The sea war aimed at the destruction of this source of strength, as it had done in the days of Elizabeth and Cromwell. Yet as Spain, constantly unsuccessful on the continent, survived nine years of war, it may be thought that the effort against her sea-borne trade was wasted, and constituted an indecisive, and therefore weak, form of warfare. But in judging by results, the efficiency of the measures adopted in pursuance of any given policy must be considered, before it is possible to pronounce upon the merits or demerits of the policy as a whole.

The narrative has shewn that the war began with a year of cruising warfare with inadequate forces. The sailing of the galleons was stopped, but this did not bring Spanish commerce across the Atlantic to a complete standstill, for the reason that the blockade was not effective, the squadrons off Cadiz not being strong enough to keep the sea constantly.

<sup>1</sup> *Préliminaires de la guerre de la succession d'Autriche*, p. 102.

Neither the ports of departure nor those of arrival were securely closed. Thus trade—in lesser volume, it is true—continued.

The larger land operations of 1741, similarly directed against sea-borne commerce, were designed to be more decisive. Havana and Cartagena were the points in which Spain was vulnerable in the highest degree. An expedition was aimed at these vital spots, which, owing to faulty planning and execution, failed; but how great would have been its results, if successful, is measured by the breathless anxiety with which news of its progress was awaited in Spain and France. The salvation of their city by the Cartagena garrison changed the whole outlook in two worlds<sup>1</sup>; and this was due to the effect of its safety upon French and Spanish commerce. The attacks upon Santiago, Panama, and Caraccas were limited in their aims, and represent the share which falls to the army in assisting the navy to obtain command in local theatres by the capture of bases—whether of operations or commerce—of the enemy. Such attacks constitute an indispensable factor in the defence of trade, and, while they are measures auxiliary to the principal attack upon shipping, they serve the important purpose of keeping the enemy upon the defensive, and thus of assisting to protect the British trade and possessions. No dividing line can indeed be drawn between operations against commerce on the high seas, and operations against its headquarters, (such as the attacks upon Cartagena, l'Orient or Pondicherry) which have precisely the same object in view; and to assert that an enemy's trade may properly be interrupted by the seizure of a port of merchandise, but not by the capture of the ships when once they have sailed from the port, is the height of casuistry. The merchant whose property lies in the warehouses, wharves or shipping in the harbour, loses it if it be surrendered, captured, or burnt in the course of the siege as effectually as if it had been taken on the high sea; and the bankruptcies and other misfortunes which the loss entails—estimated in the case of Cartagena at 60 million francs<sup>2</sup>—are equally unpalatable to the loser whether the capture take place within or without the harbour mouth.

One factor then which reduced the efficiency of the trade attack was the manner in which it was designed and executed. A further factor which affected the British power to destroy the enemy's commerce and rendered the efforts on the part of the squadrons at sea less effectual than they could have been, was the practice of British underwriters in insuring enemy's ships. It was not until the end of the war that a bill was brought in to make this illegal, and then only in the face of the strongest opposition of the interested parties. The arguments for

<sup>1</sup> M. de Chevigny to Marshal Belleisle, August, 1741, Sautai, *op. cit.* p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> Chambrier to Frederic IV, June 9th, 1741. Sautai, *op. cit.* p. 362.



retention of the practice were based upon the advantages which were said to accrue to this country. First, there were the premiums paid, and the tax thereby imposed upon French trade. Next, it was argued that insurance was an important branch of business of which this country was in possession, and if we refused it to the French, rival businesses would be set up abroad to our detriment; the Dutch would underwrite the ships rejected by the British, and the enemy would still keep the advantages which arise from insurance. Again, the business was said to be so profitable that no laws could put a stop to it. The arguments, in fine, were directed to supporting what was stated to be a lucrative branch of commerce, the continuation of which was beneficial to the country on account of the financial gains which arose from it<sup>1</sup>.

By increasing the confidence of shipowners, insurance had proved an inducement to them to keep their ships plying at sea. As the aim of the British Navy was to distress the enemy by cutting off his trade, the practice of insuring hostile ships ran directly counter to the main interests of the country. The interests of a small body of insurance brokers, and the assumed financial advantage to the country by the inflowing of money, were receiving more consideration than the national advantage of bringing the war to an end in a favourable manner. But besides assisting the enemy thus to withstand our efforts, the practice afforded temptations to aid him even more directly. As it was to the advantage of the insurer that his clients should evade losses by capture, so it was that the French ships should receive information which should assist them to sail in safety; the information of the highest value was the strength and disposition of British squadrons. Intelligence, as was pointed out by one of the opponents of the practice of insuring<sup>2</sup>, was in the nature of their business constantly passing between the agents and their French clients. The dangers, and therefore the rate of premium, depended upon the disposition of the British ships. When every allowance was made for the patriotism of the agents it was held impossible to imagine that men whose personal interests were touched in so tender a spot as the pocket could refrain from endeavouring to convey this essential information to the enemy.

To what extent this practice affected captures cannot obviously be estimated. The frequent escapes of the French fleets can more readily be traced to the weakness of the Western Squadron, its lack of cruisers

<sup>1</sup> These gains were however calculated not to amount, in the most favourable conditions, to over £23,000 per annum. Corbyn Morris, *An Essay towards deciding . . . whether it be a National Advantage to Britain to insure the ships of her enemies.*

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 34.

before the autumn of 1746, and the want of a governing policy; but it can hardly be doubted that the continued resolution of the French merchants to continue their sailings was the outcome of their being insured, and that intelligence of value to the enemy, was occasionally disclosed. This then, was a factor tending to diminish the effect of the attack upon trade, inasmuch as it worked directly counter to the efforts of the Navy.

A further practice which operated to diminish the pressure upon the enemy, and to invalidate returns of captures, was that of ransom. A captor could restore a captured vessel to her Commander, taking from him a contract of ransom, called a "ransom bill<sup>1</sup>." This formed an agreement to pay a certain sum of money at a future date. The captured vessel then proceeded to a named port, and the bill furnished protection against capture by other enemy ships; but this protection was removed if she failed to comply with the conditions. Privateers actually carried printed forms ready for signature<sup>2</sup>.

The results of this, while advantageous to the privateer, were disadvantageous to the British State. The enemy ship and crew were still in the enemy's possession, free to continue to support their country by carrying on the trade. Like insurance, the practice diminished the power of the Navy to bring its full pressure upon the enemy<sup>3</sup>. The decisive effort against trade lay with the Western Squadron, which, by destroying the escorts, left the merchant ships a prey to the supplementary action of the British privateers; any measures therefore which diminished the actual captures made by the privateers were measures which tended towards relieving the siege of France.

Turning now our attention from the offensive to the defensive operations, we have seen that the Navy protected the country from invasion. Two serious plans were frustrated, in 1744 and 1745; and though small bodies were landed in Scotland in the critical autumn of the latter year, the French were unable to reinforce them owing to the effective work of the British squadrons in the North Sea.

The colonies were more than once in danger. Caylus, d'Anville, Rochambeau and others sailed westward on occasions unchallenged, on account of a lack of a guiding policy in the Western Squadron. But

<sup>1</sup> W. Senior, *Law Quarterly Review*, January, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Marsden, *Law and Custom of the Sea*, vol. II. p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Mr Senior points out certain specific disadvantages which are however all comprised within the one great one of weakening our powers to subdue the enemy; the number of prisoners was reduced; the amount of ransom was less than the value of the prize; the Crown's rights of capture were shut out. On the other hand, the privateer could collect many ransom bills without interrupting his operations by bringing prizes into port, and without reducing his efficiency by having to provide prize crews for them.

when that squadron was fully established and maintained, its effect was no less felt in the security of the colonies than in the destruction of French trade. Defensively and offensively it formed the keystone of the naval position. One of the grand errors of the war was that it was not established earlier.

It is not to be wondered that the country was disappointed in its fleet. Great things had been done, but miscarriages and misconduct had taken place. When, therefore, in the King's speech of 1748, the proposal was put forward to give thanks for the "signal success that had attended his Majesty's arms at sea through the course of the war," it was opposed. But the opposition distinguished between those in the lower ranks who had shewn gallantry, to whom praise and thanks were due, and those in high authority who had misdirected the war.

"Surely," said a speaker, "the taking of a few rich prizes, or a few single Ships of War, cannot be called signal success? Have we had any others except in the last year of the war? Therefore we may declare ourselves being sensible of the signal success which in the last year of the war attended his Majesty's arms at sea. . . . But when we reflect upon the unfortunate sea fight near Toulon, when we reflect upon the French fleet sailing to and from the West Indies during every year down to the very last year of the war, can we with any decency say that we are very sensible of the signal success that has attended his Majesty's arms at sea through the course of the war<sup>1</sup>." Nor did the objection stop at declining to vote thanks; an enquiry was also demanded into the causes which rendered the events of the war "so little answerable" to the bravery of the men who had fought. Unfortunately this was not granted, and an occasion of discovering errors and guarding against them in the future was missed.

The naval failures in the war have since been ascribed to indifferent officers at sea. Some of these existed, as they have always existed; but the proportion of capable men was so large that it would be improper to lay the blame for the general want of success on the officers as a whole. They were competent in their technical arts as seamen and gunners; they were courageous in action. The fault lay deeper. The reasons for the Navy's deferred success—which is indeed but another name for initial failure—were of a twofold nature—strategical and tactical. Strategically, no clear policy existed as to how the fleet was to be employed; and, when a policy had been decided upon, the best means of putting it into effect were not adopted. Tactical thought, while not so dead as some writers have averred, was lacking in vigour; dogma did

<sup>1</sup> Mr Robert Nugent's speech. Debate on the Address. *Parliamentary Debates*, vol. xiv. p. 330.

duty for doctrine, the letter and not the spirit ruled. A want of tactical skill may be atoned for by courage and conduct; but individual bravery is powerless to avert the ill-results brought about by defective strategy. An inefficient preparation before the war, and a mistaken direction during the greater part of its course, by the representatives of the Government and the Admiralty were at the bottom of the subsequent miscarriages. In the face of obstacles of so fundamental a nature the best personnel and material are, and always must be, helpless to achieve success.

## APPENDIX A

### TACTICS

THE period of the War of the Austrian Succession has come to be looked upon as that of the greatest degradation in naval tactical thought. Coming after a long period during which such operations at sea as took place did not involve any deep tactical considerations—for the battle of Passaro in 1718 was purely an action in chase—it would not be a matter for astonishment if the level of tactical art should have fallen low; for unless there exists in the administration of a Navy some element whose function is constantly to direct men's thoughts in peace towards consideration of the employment of the Navy in war, both strategically and tactically, that branch of naval training must, in the nature of things, languish. No such element then existed. Abstract naval thought in the middle of the eighteenth century had accordingly languished, but for all that it was not dead; and although we should think that it had become degraded or was dominated by wrong ideals, the study of the influences which governed it is, so far from being unnecessary, most important, since more is learnt by the study of failure than of success.

This view of the state of naval thought in the middle of the eighteenth century is largely, though not entirely, based upon the events of the battle of Toulon. So much blame for the miscarriage in this action has been ascribed to the Fighting Instructions that it has not infrequently been argued, with a certain lack both of logical and historical perspective, that Fighting Instructions of any kind serve only to impose restraints upon officers, and that any attempt to formulate some rules of conduct for action is therefore wrong. That such a danger exists admits of no denial; but to produce the feared results one or both of two factors must be present—the Instructions must either run counter to sound military principles, or there must be lack of trained understanding on the part of the persons who have to interpret and apply the instructions. If either or both of these are present then indeed miscarriages will result. But the remedy for each is obvious. It lies in the thorough inculcation during peace of correct principles, so that neither those who draw up nor those who have to act upon the Instructions can fall into error. The tendency to prepare written rules and devise schematic formations, to exact implicit obedience to them, and to substitute them for a well-understood and correct doctrine, was the real fault in the Fighting Instructions in the early part of the eighteenth century. "To say that a blind custom of obedience should be a surer obligation than duty taught and understood is to affirm that a blind man may tread surer by a guide than a seeing man can by the light<sup>1</sup>." Yet it is towards this the Instructions tended; and the tendency does not necessarily die when Instructions are abolished and signals take their place.

<sup>1</sup> Bacon, *Advancement of learning*.

While the whole principle of employing Fighting Instructions has thus come under condemnation, the failure in the battle of Toulon so far as it was connected with them was primarily due to one only of the articles. Hampering as the rigid line of battle is bound to be as an offensive formation it cannot be said that the miscarriage of February 11th, 1744, was due to the attack in single line, since the engagement was not fought in that order. Mathews did not wait to form the line before attacking. M. Castex in his excellent appreciation of this battle remarks concerning the current judgment of the battle: "En somme, pour tout le monde, même pour les Anglais, la bataille de Toulon n'a pas été gagnée parcequ'on a rompu la ligne, alors que la vérité est exactement le contraire<sup>1</sup>."

This is absolutely true. Lestock, in his pamphlets and plans indeed, vigorously assailed Mathews for his precipitancy, and ascribed the lack of success to the fact that his superior had not attacked in the prescribed manner; and Mathews has come down to posterity with a cheap tag attached to his name that he was stupid. Contemporary opinion largely took this view, though there were many—among them Rodney—who saw the truth more clearly.

The blind acceptance of and obedience to the Instructions is also referred to as a proof of the low standard of naval thought. It is not, however, a fact that they were blindly accepted by the whole naval service. That the majority did so treat them is probably true, but there were men of the questioning habit of mind at that time who declined to accept as final the principles laid down, or to act in implicit unreasoning obedience to the literal wording of the articles. The Captains of the three van ships in the battle of Toulon shewed no less by their action than by their subsequent defence of what they had done, that they believed an officer to be justified in interpreting an order in terms of common sense. Barnett at another time had not feared to dispute with his Vice-Admiral as to the proper conduct of ships in the line. Vernon, Martin and Anson all made additions to the instructions during their commands. Vernon indeed was so little dominated by any instructions that he sweepingly condemned the line of battle itself, getting to the root of the matter, and expressing opinions which may be compared with Monck and Rupert's practice at one end of the historical peace, and with Nelson's views, as given to Keats, at the other. Writing in characteristic fashion of such investigations as had been held concerning the battles of the preceding eighty years, he said, "Our enquiry since (the Dutch wars) has not been whether a Commander be bold, daring and intrepid, but whether his ship lay in such and such a disposition; and what he said and she said; whether a line of battle was properly formed, and if such a signal did not represent this or that. All these are necessary incidents, but are not the main matters; nor has any one good event happened from fighting in lines of battle at all. When officers are determined to fight in great fleets, 'tis much of the least part of the matter what order they fight in, more especially when they are determined to make that depend upon accident at last, which if thoroughly well pursued, is

<sup>1</sup> Castex, *Les idées militaires de la Marine du XVIII<sup>me</sup> Siècle*, p. 52.

unavoidably connected with science. All formality therefore as matters are circumstanced only tends to keep the main point out of the question, and to give knaves and fools an opportunity to justify themselves on the credit of jargon and nonsense<sup>1</sup>."

Vernon, it may be seen from this—and other writings of his confirm the view—believed in the pell-mell battle, the attack pressed home, unfettered by formulæ for fighting. To use his own expression, he was the contemporary representative of the "informal," as Lestock seems to have been of the "formal," school. These two schools of thought have existed ever since fleet fighting became an art. The one relies greatly upon the individual; the attack is designed beforehand upon some general lines; but once action is joined the individual is expected to make the best use of his opportunities, impetuosity in attack is encouraged, risks are freely accepted. In the other, an attempt is made to leave as little as possible to chance; the battle is not only centrally prepared in detail, but is also centrally directed to the utmost; subordinate Commanders are not permitted to act except upon direct orders from the Commander-in-Chief.

Each system has the defects of its qualities. The formal system tends to regard the fleet as the unit, while the informal makes more of the individual ship. While in the one system, an organised tactical direction governs the action from the beginning until the enemy is definitely broken and in flight, and may go so far—as in Knowles's action off Havanna—to require direction even in the pursuit, in the other, tactics in an ordered sense are early thrown to the winds and the victory is sought for in the destruction of the enemy formation and of individual ships. But while a truly lofty ideal of combination and mutual support colour the formal system, its followers are in danger of pushing the doctrine to the extreme of over centralisation. The discipline of the fleet, properly and initially a means of overthrowing the enemy, becomes a restraint which hinders the achievement of his defeat. Officers have not permission to seize the fleeting opportunity which is offered by a sudden change in situation and can only be taken advantage of by the use of individual initiative. In its worst features the discipline of the fleet degenerates still further and the maintenance of an accurate order develops into an end in itself, and is preserved for its own sake or for that of avoiding responsibility or censure, instead of for the end which it properly subserves—that of obtaining a decisive victory over the enemy.

On the other hand, the followers of the informal doctrine run the danger of neglecting tactical combination altogether, of losing cohesion, of getting units separated and crushed by a well-handled opponent, or of being unable to re-assemble if circumstances so fall out as to render assembly necessary. Once the attack has been launched everything depends upon the skill, gallantry and efficiency of individual captains and crews. In the extreme manifestations of this doctrine, tactics themselves may be looked on as unimportant and no thought given to any tactical plan of attack devised to assure a favourable situation for the onslaught. Then, instead

<sup>1</sup> "An Enquiry into the conduct of Captain Mostyn."

of a disciplined body, we have a mob of gladiators without direction of any kind, each fighting for his own hand. The remarks of Richard Gibson, writing in 1692<sup>1</sup>, furnish an illustration of the seaman's view of the formal doctrine. "If we continue this foolish way of fighting in a line (a formation which we should only use for beginning an action)<sup>2</sup> and trust to that more than to our conduct, we may live to see ourselves destroyed as the Spanish Armada in 1588, who kept to the line till scattered and undone by our fireships. By fighting in a line the coward hides his cowardice." The final sentence is singularly reminiscent of Vernon's last words, previously quoted, on knaves and fools.

The Article, numbered 21, which so greatly influenced the battle of Toulon, ran thus: "None of the ships of His Majesty's Fleet shall pursue any small number of ships of the enemy until the main body of the enemy's Fleet shall be disabled or shall run." It is the expression of the views of the formal school, and in complete opposition to those of the pell-mell school. As so much obloquy has been put upon the naval officer of that day, it is not without value to examine the genesis of this article, and to consider how far in 1740 he differed from his predecessors and his successors in his interpretation of the doctrine expressed in this important article.

The Article appears in its earliest form in Lord Wimbledon's Instructions, dated October 11th, 1625, where it runs:

"That if any ship or ships of the enemy should break out or fly, the Admiral of any squadron which should happen to be in the next and most convenient place for that purpose should send out a competent number of the fittest ships of his squadron to chase, assault, or take such ship or ships so breaking out; but no ship should undertake such a chase without the command of the Admiral, or at leastwise the Admiral of his squadron<sup>3</sup>."

This article, it will be observed, makes no reference to the main body being first disabled or in flight, for these were the days when squadrons formed the tactical unit, antecedent to the period of the line. The detachment of ships may be made at any time in the fight, and Admirals of squadrons are empowered to detach ships, though individual Captains may not pursue without permission or orders to do so.

In Lord Lindesay's instructions of three years later, this meaning is identical though the wording differs slightly. There is also a special squadron arranged for, that of the Rear-Admiral, which has the same function assigned to it as Vernon's surplus ships, or Nelson's fast sailing squadron.

"If the enemy be entangled among themselves, or forced to bear up, that an advantage may be had, then shall the Rear-Admiral with his

<sup>1</sup> *Naval Miscellany*, vol. II. pp. 142-157. Navy Records Society, vol. XL.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Laughton's transcript of the original which ran "only perform to begin"—a meaningless sentence.

<sup>3</sup> Gustavus Adolphus (ob. 1632) laid down a rule against plundering which has a close resemblance to Art. 21. "If it so please God that we beat the enemy either in the field or in his leaguer, then shall every man follow the chase of the enemies; and no man shall give himself up to fall upon the pillage so long as it is possible to follow the enemy." (Quoted by Corbett in *The capture of private property at sea.*)



squadron lay hold thereof and prosecute it with effect." Here is a true decentralisation, and a means both of keeping the main body—the van and rear—together, while furnishing a means of dealing with the situation created by confusion or flight.

In 1636 a set of Instructions were issued by Lord Northumberland, and that part of them which deals with the point under review is in the following terms:

"The uncertainty of a sea-fight is such that no certain instructions can be given by reason till we come to (it) we know not how the enemy will work, and then, (as often befalls) one ship will becalm another, (or) some not possible (? able) to luff or bear up as he would because of ships that are near him, and many other accidents which must be left to every captain to govern by his own discretion and valour."

"If any ships being in fight with an enemy's ship which shall bear room or forsake the fight by way of flight, you shall not chase the said ship but engage yourself where you shall see the most resistance to be made by the enemy, to weaken the force of those that shall most strongly oppose." This is a very clear exposition of the real meaning of the article. The object of every ship is to break down the main resistance of the enemy, and not the capture of individual ships. The broken ship can be left to herself as she is of no account so long as there are others unbroken, and to them the principal attention must be paid. At the same time, in the pell-mell of battle which is bound to occur, the discretion of Captains is trusted to make the best use of their commands.

The Commonwealth Instructions of 1654 make no reference to the pursuit of individual enemies, but they contain the germ of the same idea as Northumberland's, that nothing shall interrupt the business of destroying the enemy. But with the advent of the Duke of York a change took place; the idea of subordinating everything to the destruction of the enemy is as clearly expressed as before in the tenth article. In the additional article we have the doctrine in its final hard and fast form. In both, the commands of the Admiral are to be waited for. Article 10 ran thus:

"If in time of fight God shall deliver any of the enemy's ships into our power by their being disabled, the Commanders of His Majesty's ships in condition of pursuing the enemy are not during fight to stay, take, possess, or burn any of them, lest by so doing the more important service be lost, but shall expect command from the flag officers for doing thereof when they shall see fit to command it."

The additional Article ran, as we know it, thus:

"None of the ships of His Majesty's fleet shall pursue any small number of ships of the enemy before the main (body) of the enemy's fleet shall be disabled or shall run."

Thus, where in the earlier Instructions a discretion was extended to Commanders, consonant with sound military principles, in this last Article all liberty and initiative are denied absolutely, and the fleet becomes a machine depending for its impulse in every situation upon a central direction. It is difficult to assign a reason for this. It may lie in the personality of the Duke himself, who may have desired as absolute a direction

of a naval action as he did of the state; or it may lie in the substitution in greater numbers of the plain seaman for the earlier Commanders, who were gentlemen most frequently with military training. The plain seaman, the tarpaulin, splendid yardarm to yardarm fighter as he was, had no military training and must often have lacked a nice sense of the application of tactical effort. A man of a more sympathetic habit of mind than the Duke might have made much use of his fine fighting qualities; but undoubtedly it is difficult for any one to retain order long enough to ensure the development of the required tactical situation, and to choose the exact moment at which to give free play to initiative, especially in a time when signalling was defective. To a man like the Duke of York it must have been doubly difficult, as it meant that at a certain stage of an action he would lose all control of its direction.

Monck and Rupert belonged to a different school. Tacticians of a high order, they appreciated as much as the Duke of York the need for a tactical system, and for launching an attack in good order and form, but they saw none the less that the decision must rest eventually with the hardest and most efficient fighter. While therefore they kept their fleets well in hand in the approach, once battle was joined they aimed at the absolute destruction of every enemy ship, and imposed no restraining influences upon their Captains in the form of instructions for preserving cohesion. With them it was the *form* of the attack which broke up the enemy's cohesion and rendered further cohesion unnecessary on their own part by the disturbance of the equilibrium between the fleets. A situation was created, order was broken in the enemy's force, and the subsequent close fighting not only destroyed individual enemy ships but effectually prevented him from again restoring order in his squadrons. According to the Duke of York a general superiority had to be established along the whole line before regular infighting and destruction could begin. What the one school of thought looked on as a means to produce a desired situation, the other did not employ until the situation had been created. The drawback of the latter system was that the desired ascendancy was never reached throughout the line; hence followed inconclusive engagements. The attempts made by the soldier Admirals to attenuate the inflexibility of the line were however fruitless. The results of the great St James's fight of July 25th, 1666, gave opportunity for criticism by the formal school, which they did not hesitate to use, to prove the errors of the impetuous attack. The British ships in the rear during this battle pressed home their assault with such vigour that they were carried to leeward in chasing the Dutch rear and were soon in a dangerous situation. In an annotated copy of the fighting instructions of 1673, now in the Admiralty Library, the following observation is written:

"One thing remarkable in this battle is that Tromp commanding the rear of the Dutch fleet keeping his squadron entire, and the eagerness of our pressing after those which gave way, gave him an opportunity of weathering some of our ships and putting a freship on board the Resolution and destroyed her. This was for not pressing them successively as each ship gave way. For in case of a defeat it is not pursuing the first disabled, but to press the rest in condition."

This idea of retaining the cohesion of the fleet until the whole main body of the enemy is broken had bitten deep into the minds of the men of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The sound part of the principles upon which it was based was however vitiated by another view, which was that order was to be preserved for its defensive value. The original conception of keeping the fleet in hand in order to effect a complete victory merged into a formalism of the worst kind—the expression of which may be read in its fullness in Lestock's appeal to precedent—in which the fleet was kept together in order to secure it against attack. This was the view which tended to become prominent in a prolonged period of peace. Defence took a higher place than attack.

Thus, when the war of the Austrian Succession broke out, our tactical doctrine was largely coloured by the defensive factor. As the account of the battle of Toulon has shewn, the 'Norfolk,' 'Somerset,' and 'Dragon' were all deterred by Article 21 from following and destroying their opponents. Hawke himself did not venture to break the rule and pursue his first antagonist. Burrish might (though this can only be a surmise based on a statement of his own) have followed up the 'Hercules.' The effect of such pursuits would have been the complete separation of the Spanish from the French, certainly the capture of those ships which escaped to Spain—'Constante,' 'Hércules,' 'America'—and probably the destruction of the whole of the Spanish rear; but the ships astern of the flagship which have earned such an unfortunate notoriety were able to defend their inactivity by reference to this article—as Vernon said, knaves and fools were given an opportunity to justify themselves. Mathews himself, when asked at the enquiry, "Could not those four ships have intercepted the four Spanish ships which did not come up till the close of the evening?" replied that he thought they could not have done it "unless they had broke the line to chase, which was against rule<sup>1</sup>."

In spite of the benumbing effect of this article in the battle of Toulon, no change was made during the war. Possibly the facts that the Courts Martial were not held until two years later, and that the evidence was never printed, prevented the cause of the failure from being widely known.

In the three other principal actions which took place—Anson's, Hawke's and Knowles's—Article 21 played no part. The first two were actions in chase, in which the main body of the enemy's fleet being on the run from the beginning, ships would be justified in pursuing any small body of ships which broke away or dropped astern. Such small bodies or single ships were, however, left alone. Each British ship as she beat down the resistance of the vessel she engaged, passed on to engage another opponent, leaving the disabled ship to be taken up by the vessels coming up from astern; and it is curious to notice that while Article 21 was preserved, the final Additional Instructions of 1781–3 reversed the procedure in chase, and directed ships to destroy their original opponents themselves<sup>2</sup>.

The subsequent history of the Article, after the period dealt with in this book, throws further light upon the inflexibility of naval thought upon

<sup>1</sup> *Parliamentary History*, vol. XIII. p. 1251.

<sup>2</sup> Corbett, *Signals and Instructions*, N.R. Soc. vol. xxxv. p. 21, Article XIV.

the question concerned, in spite of rude assault both on paper and in practice. The Seven Years' War opened with the Article unchanged; but in 1759—three years after its beginning—a most startling revolt from the doctrine to be found in a set of Instructions used by Boscawen, in which Article 21 is thrown to the winds in the following terms:

“Notwithstanding the General Printed Fighting Instructions, if at any time when engaged with an equal number of the enemy's ships, and the ship opposed to any of His Majesty's ships is forced out of the line, you are hereby required and directed to pursue her and endeavour to take or destroy her.”

At what date, for what reason, or by whom this most radical amendment was made is not known. It cannot have been in existence at the time of Byng's action with *de la Galissonnière*, otherwise the five leading ships, when they had beaten their oppositors out of the line, would have pursued them—a proceeding which would have put a very different complexion upon the action and upon the siege of Minorca, how different it is difficult to estimate. It may indeed have been brought in as a result of that engagement, by men who also knew something of the battle of Toulon. Its terms smack roundly of Hawke, Peter Warren and Boscawen; it is not known whether it was issued generally by the Board or was a local order, though it appears in printed form. Failing other evidence it is fair to attribute it to Boscawen himself, and so to give that officer another title to be looked on as one of our models of fearlessness of responsibility<sup>1</sup>.

There is further evidence that the Fighting Instructions were felt about this time to be lacking, for a completely new set was prepared about 1760—the exact date is uncertain, but it must have been very near that time—which is cast in a wholly different form from the existing set. Whether they were issued or not, or whether they were only a draft, is not known. In them the Article in the Duke's form does not appear, but a new clause runs thus:

“If the Admiral upon coming into action with the enemy think proper to haul down the signal for the line of battle, every ship in the fleet is to use his utmost endeavours to take or destroy such ships of the enemy as they may be opposed to, by engaging them as close as possible and pursuing them if they are driven out of the line, without any regard to the situation which was prescribed to themselves by the line of battle before the signal was hauled down.”

This is an attempt to carry into effect the old idea that the *melée* may be begun before the enemy is broken or in flight. It may be that this is an article of Anson's, as it so closely interprets what we know to have been his views.

The years of peace between the Treaty of Paris and the outbreak of the war with France, when that Power joined the revolted American colonies, not unnaturally produced no change in an instruction of this nature.

<sup>1</sup> “How unfortunate it is that the fine gallant fellow, whose letters I enclose, sinks under responsibility; which, in truth, I have found to be the case with almost every valuable officer in the navy: Boscawen was an exception to it.” St Vincent to Lord Howick, April 24th, 1806.

Where two long wars had failed to shake the domination of the tactical school whose thought it expresses, thirteen years of peace would not do so. Lord Howe's instructions of 1777 retain the Article though with the important addition, "Except in the instance of their chief commander or other principal officer so circumstanced." Captains, however, who had forced their opponents out of the line were to leave them and proceed to the assistance of ships hard pressed. The next five years of war, so far from softening the Article in the direction of decentralisation had the opposite effect, for in 1782 Howe omitted the qualifying words quoted above, and the Article returned to its original form. Sir C. H. Knowles tells us that he tried in that year to induce Howe to permit his Captains to follow up their enemies, but without success. The French, said Knowles in a pamphlet which was published in 1830<sup>1</sup>, took advantage of this custom of ours of not following up ships beaten out of the line, and devised a manœuvre "like the mode of retreating by companies" to meet an attack. Alternate ships bore up and formed a line to leeward, and when this lee line was formed the ships to windward did the same, and dropped to leeward, thus continually to stretch out the British ships and rake them in their advance. "It is therefore," wrote Knowles, "absolutely necessary that every ship should (without waiting for any signal for that purpose) pursue her opponent and endeavour to take or destroy her, for a line of battle is no longer useful after the enemy's ships are brought to action, as personal courage must then decide it." Here we have the Rupert and Vernon view very clearly expressed. Knowles ends up with a note on the naval side of the question. "It was a maxim of Julius Caesar never to check the ardour of his men in action; and in battles fought on shore, each regiment under a certain latitude, pursues its advantage. Why then should not each ship therefore do the same at sea? with deference, acting otherwise is contrary to the art of war."

The Duke of York's Article nevertheless held its own and persisted well into the 19th century. It is therefore improper to say that those Captains who failed to break the line off Toulon in 1774 deserve special selection for censure, when their conduct is so strongly supported by the opinion and practice of so many generations of Commanders.

One effect of the battle of Toulon was to raise controversies as to whether ships should quit their divisions in order to get into action. The question had arisen before in the case of Barnett and Lestock, but was evidently brought to a head by the inaction of the latter's division in that battle. Admiral William Rowley<sup>2</sup>, very soon after assuming the command, issued a set of "Observations" dealing with that question and with some others. Although not cast in the usual form of Additional Instructions, these observations are of the same nature. As they illustrate the mode of thought at the time, they deserve notice.

"Whereas by the First Article of the Fighting Instructions signed by

<sup>1</sup> *Observations on Naval Tactics and on the claims of Mr Clerk of Eldin.* By Admiral Sir C. H. Knowles, Bart., G.C.B. (B.M. Library. Ref. "Knowles.")

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Rowley's "Observations and Instructions in relation to engaging the Enemy." September 17th, 1744.

Admiral Mathews it is declared that in forming a line of battle all the ships in the fleet are to take their distance from the centre, and whereas several Admirals and Commanding Officers have insisted that the ships in other divisions are to have no regard to their own but are to continue to join the line taking it from the centre, tho' the Admiral to whose squadron the ships belong with part of his Division may be a great way ahead or astern.

"It is my opinion that after the signal is made for the line of battle every ship should endeavour to get into her station in her own Division. The ships in any Division which are to be next to the centre Division are to make the proper sail to join the centre with that Division, having a particular regard not to separate from the Division to which they belong. This is to be observed by all captains who are either ahead or astern of the centre Division, as well as abreast, it being my opinion that all Admirals and Commanders of squadrons are to be answerable for their whole squadron or any part thereof not joining the centre properly as occasion may require for the whole or any part thereof.

"The 29th Article says that no ship shall leave her station upon any pretence whatsoever. This seems chiefly to relate (if not only) to ships disabled. But the better to explain it—I do hereby require and direct all Captains of His Majesty's ships in the line in an engagement, whenever any ship shall be overmatched or pressed by the enemy, that the next ship to her breaks the line and goes directly to her assistance, and the next ship to the ship so over matched neglecting to perform this service, the next ship to her is to do it<sup>1</sup>, first sending an officer on board the Captain whose duty it was to support the said ship, to know his reasons, and then send an account thereof, as soon as possible to the next commanding officer.

"All ships are to keep their barges alongside, manned and armed, for this or any other service during the time of an engagement.

"In the time of action, if any of the enemy's fireships should come to attempt burning our ships, the ships ahead and astern of that ship which seems to be attempted to be burned by the said fireship are to send their barges with a lieutenant to endeavour to destroy the said fireship. But in case the fireship is so near any of our ships that she is in the utmost danger of being boarded, the ship ahead and astern of her are to close the line between her and the enemy so as to cover her from the fire, while her own people are endeavouring to save her. Whenever such an accident shall happen, the Frigates vessels and small tenders in that Division are immediately to repair to that ship's assistance, as they will answer the contrary at their peril. If such an accident should happen to an Admiral, or Commander of a squadron, his second who sees him coming on board his ship is to have his flag ready to hoist the moment the Admiral comes alongside.

"All Frigates which are to repeat signals, and have repeated any which are not observed by the private ships, etc., whose signals may be made, shall every ten minutes fire a gun as a warning gun to look out, which gun shall always be fired as fast as possible to be distinguished from other signal guns. And every ship is to keep a proper midshipman on the poop on purpose to watch and write down all signals, etc., as pass in the engagement.

<sup>1</sup> This is clearly the outcome of the failure to succour the 'Marlborough.'

“But it shall be the Master’s business to see the person so placed, and to put his name down in the log-book before the engagement begins, and to call every quarter of an hour to the said person to see he minds his duty and gives constant accounts to the Captain of what passes. And the Master is to be responsible for placing him and another in his room should he be killed or wounded<sup>1</sup>.”

The finality of the Fighting Instructions in this war is shewn in a set of Additional Instructions issued by Hawke in September, 1747. An examination of these shews that the Additional Instructions in this mould began sooner than had been thought, the earliest form in which they have hitherto been known, being dated 1759, and tentatively attributed to Boscawen who used them in that year<sup>2</sup>.

This set embodies a form of Vernon’s addition of 1739 (Art. 1), instructions of Anson’s (Art. 2 and 14), and Martin’s directions for dealing with fireships (Art. 15). It seems probable, from a comparison of other of the Articles with Anson’s Journal, that the majority emanated from him, and belong to a date at least as early as the April cruise in 1747. There is, in fact, more of Anson than of Hawke in the series, and although issued by Hawke when he took command, they were probably inherited by him from Martin, Anson and Warren.

*Hawke’s Fighting Instructions.*

September, 1747.

I.

In case of meeting with a squadron of the enemy’s ships that may be less in number than the squadron under my command, if I would have any of the smaller ships quit the line, that those of the greatest force may be opposed to the enemy, I will put abroad the signal for speaking with the Captain of such ship, or ships, as I would have leave the line, and hoist a flag striped yellow and white on the flagstaff at the maintopmast head: then the next ships are to close up the line and those that have quitted are to hold themselves in readiness to assist any ship that may be disabled or hard pressed, or to take her station if she is obliged to go out of the line, in which case the strongest ship that is withdrawn from the line is strictly enjoined to supply her place and fill up the vacancy.

II.

And in case of meeting with any squadron or ships of war of the enemy that have merchant ships under their convoy (though the signal for the line of battle should be out) if I would have any of the frigates that are out of the line, or any of the ships of the line, fall upon their convoy whilst the others are engaged, I will put abroad a pendant for speaking with the Captain of such ship or ships and the flag above mentioned for quitting the line, with a pendant under it, upon which signal such ship, or ships, are to use their utmost endeavours to take or destroy the enemy.

<sup>1</sup> This paper is among the Hawke manuscripts at Womersley.

<sup>2</sup> Corbett, *Fighting Instructions*, N.R. Soc. vol. xxix. pp. 204-5, 219.

## III.

If at any time while we are engaged with the enemy, the Admiral should judge it necessary to come to a closer engagement than at the distances we then are, he will hoist a red and white flag on the flagstaff at the maintopmast head and fire a gun: then every ship is to engage the enemy as close as possible; and if the Admiral would have any particular ship do so, he will make the same signal and the signal for speaking with the Captain.

## IV.

When the signal is made for the squadron to draw into a line of battle (one ship ahead of another) by hoisting an union flag at the mizen peak and firing a gun, every ship is to make all the sail she can into her station and keep at the distance of half a cable length from each other. If I would have them to be a cable length asunder I will hoist a blue flag with a red cross under the union flag at the mizen peak and fire a gun; and if at two cables length asunder, a white and blue flag under the union flag at the mizen peak and fire a gun. But when I would have the squadron draw into a line of battle one ship abreast of another and keep at those distances as above directed, I will hoist a pendant under the said flags at the mizen peak.

## V.

When sailing in a line of battle one ship ahead of another, and I would have the ship that leads to alter her course and steer more to starboard, I will hoist a red flag under the union flag at the mizen peak and fire a gun for every point of the compass I would have her alter her course.

## VI.

And if I would have the ship that leads to alter her course and lead more to Port, I will hoist a flag striped blue and white on the flagstaff at the maintopmast head and fire a gun for every point of the compass I would have her alter her course, and every ship in the squadron is to get into her station as fast as possible.

## VII.

If the fleet should happen to be in two divisions and I would have them form themselves into separate lines of battle, one ship ahead of another, at the distance of a cable's length asunder, and each division to be abreast the other when formed, at the distance of one cable's length and a half, I will hoist a flag chequered blue and yellow at the mizen peak and fire a gun and then every ship is to get into her station accordingly.

## VIII.

If I should meet with a squadron of the enemy's ships of war inferior in number to the ships under my command those ships of my squadron (over and above the number of the enemy) that happen to fall in either ahead of the enemy's van or astern of his rear while the rest of my ships are engaged are hereby required and directed to quit the line without waiting for the signal and to distress the enemy by raking the ships in the van and rear, notwithstanding the first part of the 24th Article of the Fighting Instructions to the contrary.



## IX.

And if I would chase with the whole squadron and would have a certain number of my ships that are nearest to the enemy draw into a line of battle ahead of me in order to engage the ships in their rear endeavouring at the same time to get up to their van till the rest of the ships of my squadron can come up with them, I will hoist a white flag with a red cross on the flagstaff at the maintopmast head and fire the number of guns as follows:

When I would have  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Five ships} \\ \text{Seven ships} \end{array} \right\}$  draw into a line ahead of each other I will fire  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1 \text{ gun} \\ 3 \text{ guns} \end{array} \right.$

## X.

Then the ships are immediately to form the line without any regard to seniority, or the general form delivered but according to their distances from the enemy viz.: The headmost and nearest ship to the enemy is to lead and the sternmost to bring up the rear, that no time may be lost in the pursuit; and all the rest of the ships are to form and strengthen that line as soon as they can come up with them without regard to my general form of the order of battle.

## XI.

Whereas every ship is directed when sailing in a line of battle to keep the same station those ships do that are next the Admiral (always taking it from the centre), if at any time I think the ship ahead of me is at too great a distance I will make it known to her by putting abroad a pendant at the jibboom end and keep it flying till she is in her proper station. And if she finds the ship ahead of her is at a greater distance from her than she is from the ship my flag shall be on board of, she shall make the same signal and keep it flying till she thinks that ship is at a proper distance, and so on to the van of the line.

## XII.

And when I think the ship astern of me is at too great a distance I will make it known by putting abroad a pendant at the cross jack yard arm and keep it flying till she is in her proper station. And if she finds the ship astern of her at a greater distance than she is from the ship my flag shall be on board of, she shall make the same signal and keep it flying till she thinks that ship at a proper distance, and so on to the rear of the line.

## XIII.

And if at any time the Captain of any particular ship in the line thinks the ship without him is at a greater distance than those ships are that are next the centre; he shall make the above signal and then that ship is immediately to close and get into her proper station.

## XIV.

When I would have the fireships prime I will hoist a pendant chequered blue and yellow on the flagstaff at the maintopmast head and fire a gun; but in case we are at any time in chase of the enemy's fleet the fireships are to prime as fast as possible whether the signal be made or not.

XVI<sup>1</sup>.

You are to hold His Majesty's ship under your command in a constant readiness for action, and in case of coming to an engagement with the enemy if they have the wind of us to keep your barge manned and armed with hand and fire chain grapnels, etc., on the off-side from them to be ready to assist as well any ship that may be attempted by the fireships of the enemy, as our own fireships when they shall be ordered upon service.

In estimating the force of opposing squadrons in the actions of this war, it is important to guard against a common error of merely counting the total number of guns on each side. This would give an inaccurate idea of the relative strength. For one thing the ships of larger classes carried heavier guns than the smaller ships, and the superiority was not only one of more guns, but of heavier pieces as well. Thus it would be improper to say that a 70-gun ship was merely 5 guns better than a 60 because she carried 5 more guns on the broadside than the other. A comparison between two ships gives the following differences:

	70-gun ship	60-gun ship
Lower deck	28 32-pounders	24 24-pounders
Upper deck	28 18- „	26 12- „
Quarter deck	10 9- „	8 6- „
Fore castle	4 9- „	2 6- „

The French ships also appear to have been stiffer than the English and therefore able to carry their lower ports in heavier weather. This is referred to in several places; it was one of the chief complaints of Mostyn in his undistinguished action, so scathingly commented on by Vernon, that his ships lay along, while the Frenchmen stood up and were able to use all their guns. Mathews, referring to this and to the nearness of his lower deck ports to the water, wrote concerning it:

“The ‘Chichester’s’ Commander attempted to keep open his two aftermost ports but was soon obliged to let them fall again, the water coming in so fast. . . . As for the rest of her ports, they were caulked in England and have never been opened since, nor will they, except when in a mill pond. I affirm that a 64-gun ship of France is a better man-of-war than she, the ‘Torbay,’ ‘Cambridge’ or ‘Dorsetshire’; nay, the ‘Princess Caroline’ took in so much water that her commander was obliged to order his decks to be scuttled to let it down into the hold. Rear-Admiral Rowley was forced to run out his weather guns, to lash 30 tons of water to windward and to cut away one of his lee anchors, else he could not have made use of his lower tier. At the same time all the French ships carried their ports up fore and aft. The ‘Berwick,’ ‘Stirling Castle’ and ‘Revenge’ likewise took in water.”

The superiority of the French armaments is frequently referred to, and a demand made for heavier guns. On this subject Mathews also commented.

<sup>1</sup> This order was issued by Anson on May 28th, 1747 (see Anson's Journal). It derived from an order of Martin's issued in 1746. (Martin, In letters.)

"Neither is there any proportion in the metal which the enemy's ships carry and ours, especially when our ships cannot make use of their heavier tier, our 80-gun ships then having but 12- and 6-pounders, whereas some of the French 74-gun ships carry 40-, 24- and 9-prs., as Rear-Admiral Rowley found by experience: the rest 32, 18 and 9: their 64-gun ships 24, 12 and 8, besides the great number of officers and men more than we have<sup>1</sup>."

The outcome of these and other complaints was the appointment of a committee of flag officers under Sir John Norris to consider the question of ship design. It is interesting to note that an increase of size was contemplated, and that the committee "in the first place enquired into the depth of water in the several docks of each yard at the different seasons of the year with the dimensions of them, what ships they were capable of receiving and whether they could conveniently be made deeper, that we might the better judge how much the dimensions of the first and second rates might be increased."

Knowles, who was certainly one of the principal artillerists of the Navy, wrote strongly on the under gunning of the British ships. "Owing to the light guns carried by our ships," he wrote to Anson<sup>2</sup>, "one of their ships of 52 guns is near as good as ours of 70, and their 64- and 74-gun ships have seldom or ever more than 4 guns of a side on the quarterdeck." He advocated heavier metal below and more ports in a tier, and gave the following comparison between British and Spanish ships.

	Guns	Men	Lower tier	Upper deck	Q.D.	Fore castle
			prs.	prs.	prs.	prs.
'Conquistador'	66	750	15 of 32	15 of 12	2 of 9	1 of 12
'San Carlos'	60	600	13 ,, 24	14 ,, 12	2 ,, 6	1 ,, 9
'Dragon'	64	650	14 ,, 24	14 ,, 12	3 ,, 6	1 ,, 12
'Prince Frederick'	70	480	13 ,, 24	13 ,, 12	7 ,, 6	2 ,, 6
'Superbe'	60	400	13 ,, 24	13 ,, 9	6 ,, 6	1 ,, 6
'Severne'	50	300	12 ,, 18	11 ,, 9	2 ,, 6	1 ,, 6

"The unthinking populace," he continued, "are too free to censure without examining into the reason of things, and imagine it strange that an English ship of war of 70 guns cannot take a French or Spanish ship of the same force, whereas it is pretty apparent our 70-gun ships are little superior to their ships of 52 guns."

These facts require to be kept in mind in estimating the relative values of ships. They were well known to sea officers at the time. They go far towards explaining the stout resistance offered by the 'Poder,' and that of the squadrons of de l'Étandière and de la Jonquière to the numerically superior squadrons of Hawke and Anson; and add glory to the 'Lion's' engagement with the 'Elizabeth.'

<sup>1</sup> In letters. Mathews, February 25th, 1744.

<sup>2</sup> Anson's Correspondence, B.M. 15936, p. 119, January 6th, 1745.

## APPENDIX B

### COLONIAL DEFENCE DURING THE WAR

1739—1748

THE defence of the colonies and the defence of trade are so much bound up with each other that it is in reality incorrect to separate one from the other in a general sense. The squadrons in the principal stations at home and in colonial waters contributed the main protection both to the colonies and the trade, oceanic and local; but the theatres of operations of the squadrons were restricted, and were governed largely by the interests they had to protect and the proximity of enemy bases. Thus, in the early years of the war with Spain the fleet in the West Indies was concerned principally with the area bounded by Cuba on the north, the coast of Mexico on the west, the Spanish main on the south and, roughly speaking, a line running from Porto Rico to Margarita on the east. The only British colony within this area was the island of Jamaica, and its protection fell naturally to the squadron; but outside this area there were the settlements and colonies from Georgia to the northward, Newfoundland, the British Leeward Islands, Barbados and Bermuda to be protected.

The question of the defence of these possessions had formed the subject of Acts of Parliament so early as 1696, when an Act dealing with the allocation of ships for the purpose of their protection was put into force. Another Act in 1707 dealt with the same subject, and, in illustration of the interdependence of trade and colonies, these Acts related to both these subjects. Throughout Queen Anne's wars two or three 4th and 5th rate ships<sup>1</sup> were stationed at Barbados, for the protection of the island, and one or two 5th or 6th rates in the Leeward Islands.

In the years of peace that followed, small ships were maintained as stationed ships to put down piracy, prevent smuggling and generally to protect the islands. In 1737, before the troubles with Spain became acute, the following was the distribution of the stationed ships in Africa, North America and the West Indies:

Africa	'Greenwich,' 50, 'Diamond,' 40, 'Spence,' 6.10
Jamaica	'Dunkirk,' 60, 'Kinsale,' 40, 'Drake,' 4.10
Barbados	'Roebuck,' 40
Leeward Islands	'Lowestoft,' 20
Bahamas	'Shark,' 6.10
New York	'Tartar,' 20
New England	'Squirrel,' 20
Virginia	'Sea Horse,' 20
South Carolina	'Rose,' 20, 'Seaford,' 20
Georgia	'Hawk,' 6.10

<sup>1</sup> Two from 1703 to 1708, and three from 1708 to 1713.

Reinforcements were made in 1738. The 'Phoenix,' Captain Fanshawe, was ordered to the American coast in January, taking out transports with Oglethorpe's regiment and remaining as senior officer on the coast. In February the 'Anglesea' and 'Saltash' were ordered to reinforce the Leeward Islands station. In May the 'Hector' and 'Blandford,' conveying more transports for Georgia and taking out Oglethorpe himself, were directed to remain on the Virginia and Georgia stations respectively.

The instructions to the Commanders on the American coast and in the Antilles were of the same tenour. The ships in each of those main areas, while allocated to protection of a particular locality, formed a group which was to act as one body in the event of any part being threatened. Thus the instructions of the 'Hector'<sup>1</sup> directed Captain Peyton that if at any time he was informed that the "Spaniards are making or preparing to make any attempts on Georgia or any other of his Majesty's settlements in those parts, you are immediately to repair to their assistance, and having done your utmost in conjunction with the other stationed ships for the defence and protection of the said colonies, to return again to Virginia." All the other Captains on the coast had similar instructions; and the same system obtained in the West Indian Islands, where the Captains of the ships at Barbados and in the Leeward Islands were ordered to maintain a constant correspondence and assist each other in event of need. In each case the Commanders of the men of war were ordered to communicate their instructions to the Governors and Councils of the colonies to which they were appointed, and to consult with them as to the employment of their ship for the protection of the trade and the coast.

The war with Spain had not long been in progress before complaints began to be received from the colonies regarding their protection. In May, 1740, both Barbados and the Leeward Islands sent petitions for more protection in view of their insecurity. These complaints were referred by the Duke of Newcastle to the Admiralty, who replied that there were at Barbados a 50-gun ship and at the Leeward Islands a 40, a 20 and a sloop, and that more ships could not be spared. "The ordinary guard in Queen Anne's war did not exceed this" they wrote—a statement not absolutely correct as there were never less than two ships at Barbados during the period referred to.

Requests from other parts for more protection came in. In January, 1741, a complaint was made from Boston that the 'Squirrel' had been taken away by Warren 18 months previously, and no ship had been left to protect the coast. It was represented that formerly a 50- and a 20-gun ship had been stationed at Boston. Now, with Cape Breton so near a neighbour and so important a base of operations, a 60 and two 20's were asked for. A few months later—in June—the Admiralty were asked to appoint a 20-gun ship to cruise on the Hatteras—Cape Fear coast, as privateers from San Augustin were attacking the coast and the trade; but the want of small ships in home waters was still so great that no addition could be made to the colonial squadrons. It had been arranged that ships in the Leeward Islands should go to

<sup>1</sup> Out letters. May 9th, 1738.

Boston in the hurricane months to clean, but while so doing they could be of no service to the local defence; and moreover, the removal of these ships from their stations caused an immediate objection from the localities to which they belonged. In July, 1741, Mr James Dottin of Barbados sent in a strong protest against the 'Portland,' Captain Hawke, being taken to Boston in the hurricane season "when his presence may be every day wanted." On receiving this protest the Admiralty rescinded the order in the following terms: "The Government of Barbados having represented to us that your refitting at New England detains the ship much longer from the island than if you were to do it at Antigua, and gives encouragement to the enemy's privateers to hurt and annoy their trade, you are hereby required and directed, notwithstanding our order to you of 1st October, 1739, not to proceed any more with the ship you command to New England during the hurricane season, but when there is occasion for it to go to Antigua to refit her; and in doing thereof you are to use the utmost expedition that your stay from Barbados may be as short as possible; and you are to order the 'Scarborough'<sup>1</sup>, when that ship is in want of refitting to proceed also to Antigua for that purpose. And you are to take care that both ships may not be refitting at the same time, but that one of them be constantly, and both of them as often as possible, cruising for the protection of the trade of the island you are stationed at<sup>2</sup>."

Some reinforcements to the stationed ships were made in 1741, but the complaints of insecurity continued. At the same time the movement made by the merchants in their great protests in 1741 to obtain more protection for the trade included an attempt to get more ships allocated to colonial defence. The Bill proposed for the protection of trade and navigation in May, 1742, to which reference has already been made, contained stringent clauses to tie the stationed ships securely to their stations and allow their Captains no liberty of action. The following clauses refer to these points:

"Whereas it is of the utmost importance to our settlements in America and the trade thereof that the commanders of ships stationed there should use their best endeavours for the protection and security of such trade and the colonies there; be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that none of his Majesty's ships which shall be stationed at any of the said settlements shall quit or leave their stations under pretence of going to careen or refit or under any other pretence whatsoever without an especial order from the Lord High Admiral or Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral, or the Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's ships of war in those seas or in America for the time being."

"And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that the Commanders of his Majesty's ships of war on their arrival at any of the said settlements shall deliver a copy of the orders they shall have received from

<sup>1</sup> She was then added to the Barbados station.

<sup>2</sup> Out letters. September 15th, 1741. The final paragraph in the letter has a ring which naval officers will recognise. "Whenever either your ship or the 'Scarborough' is at Antigua the Naval Officer there is to be assisted with as many men as can be spared from either of the ships for repairing the careening wharf, storehouses, etc., and converting such old and decayed stores as are convertible to any use for his Majesty's service."

the Lord High Admiral [or, etc.] so far as they relate to the protection of the said colonies to the Governor and Council of the respective colony or plantation where they shall be stationed; which orders shall be entered into the Council books of such colony or plantation respectively; and the said Governor and Council are hereby authorized and empowered to give such directions in writing to the Captains and Commanders of such stationed ships as they shall think will be most for the protection and security of their trade; and the said Captains and Commanders are hereby required to conform to and observe the same, provided the same do not contradict the instructions they shall have received from the said Lord High Admiral ... [or, etc.]”

This extraordinary, if not unique, attempt on the part of the legislature to usurp the functions of the executive and attempt to determine the course of naval strategy by Act of Parliament was strongly resisted by the Admiralty. The effect it would have had is obvious. The ships would have been tied to the islands or settlements for whose defence they were allotted, and would have become a fixed defence and no more. Even though the authority of the Admiralty and the Commander-in-Chief were retained, the ships would in actual practice have been so completely under the command of the Governors and Assemblies that their removal would have been impossible without endless correspondence. No initiative would have been left to individual Commanders, and such an action as that of Warren in taking the ‘Superbe’ and the other ships away from Antigua to capture Cape Breton would have been rendered impossible. The clause giving to the Governors the command in the colonies had already been tried, the First Lord said, in the wars of William III and Queen Anne’s time, and had been found “inconvenient.” The effect had been to centralise on the defence of the particular spot, and its immediate interests, rather than on the general interests of the country. The disposition of each locality to imagine that it was the objective of the enemy’s attack has been seen in 1745 when Caylus came out to Martinique with his squadron, and every island from Jamaica to Barbados expected to see his topsails coming over the horizon. A less pardonable effect of the local command had been experienced in 1696 and 1703, when one of the Governors used the ships to protect his own and his friends’ vessels, and let others suffer, and so made for himself a great fortune<sup>1</sup>.

The House of Commons did not fail to grasp the undesirability of this local command, and the Bill did not pass. No great alteration was made in the form of the instructions to Captains, who were directed to communicate their instructions to the Governors and Councils, “*consult and advise* with them from time to time in what manner the ships and sloops under your command may best be employed in guarding the coasts and securing the trade of those islands from any attempt of the enemy, and to govern yourself as shall be agreed on, using your utmost endeavours to take or destroy all such ships or vessels of the enemy as shall come upon the coasts of the said islands<sup>2</sup>.” The pressure, however, had some effect, as greater stress

<sup>1</sup> Lord Winchelsea’s speech in the Debate on the Act. May, 1742.

<sup>2</sup> Instructions to Captain Philpot, H.M.S. ‘Lynn,’ 1742, Leeward Islands station.

was laid than had been previously upon consulting with and obtaining the concurrence of the Governors. The instructions to the 'Otter' (which are the same as those of the other ships in the Leeward Islands) of September 27th, 1742, ran as follows:

"Whereas we have directed the Captains of his Majesty's ships stationed at Barbados to hold a constant correspondence with you, you are, whenever you find the enemy's ships too strong for you, to send immediate advice thereof to the Captains of the said ships whom we have ordered to repair to your assistance and endeavour jointly to take or destroy them: and if the Captains of the said ships shall at any time send you notice of the enemy being too strong for them, you are with all possible diligence to proceed to their assistance *communicating in the first place the intelligence you have received to the Governor and Council of the Leeward Islands and receiving their concurrence for your so doing.* And when the service is performed you are directly to return to your station at the Leeward Islands."

"If the masters of the merchant ships at the Leeward Islands shall at the proper season of the year desire to be convoyed to Saltitudoes, you are, *if the Governor and Council have no objection to the same,* to proceed with them thither, and when they shall have taken on board the quantity of salt they think necessary, to return with them to the Leeward Islands if they are bound thither<sup>1</sup>." These provisions for the defence were evidently considered sufficient by the naval opinion of the time. Thus in March, 1742, Governor Bull of Charlestown, fearing that his colony was about to be attacked by the French and Spaniards, wrote and asked Ogle, who was then at Jamaica with the squadron, to send some ships to cruise off Havana and San Augustin, whence the expedition was expected to sail. Ogle replied on April 2nd, saying that he could not divide his forces so far as to send ships to so remote parts as those referred to. "You must permit me to observe," he continued, "that by a standing order of the Lords of the Admiralty, upon the approach of danger to any one of the Northern Colonies, all the ships stationed there are required to assemble forthwith and unite for the defence of the Colony that is attacked, which ships when together would make a considerable naval strength in those seas, and in my opinion are sufficient to defend that coast against any attempts the Spaniards may make, as they must do it chiefly with small vessels." He added that it would be no use to detach cruisers off Havana, as the Spanish squadron there would simply drive them off if they intended an expedition<sup>2</sup>. This letter of Ogle's leaves nothing to be desired. Short of taking the whole Jamaica squadron to blockade Havana the Spaniards could not be prevented from sending an expedition to attack South Carolina. Not only was this impossible, in view of the difficulties of maintaining a blockading squadron so far from its base, but it was also undesirable since other interests would have to suffer; and finally it was unnecessary as the small craft on the coast would be sufficient to deal with the expedition in the shoal waters into which the enemy would have to come in order to effect his landing. To scatter one or two ships of force on the coast would only be to invite

<sup>1</sup> Instructions of September 27th, 1742. Out letters. The italics are mine.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Chaloner Ogle to Governor Bull, April 2nd, 1743. In letters.



their loss at the hands of superior force, and would weaken the main squadron with no corresponding advantage.

Although there were numerous complaints, there were also, to balance them, expressions of satisfaction at the way in which the coasts had been covered. On July 8th, 1745, the Governor of Philadelphia wrote a letter to say how well the coast had been defended by the three small cruising ships under Captains Dandridge, Wimbleton and Gordon. In November of the same year the inhabitants of South Carolina expressed their gratification with the 'Loo,' Captain Utting, which was stationed upon their coast.

The authority of the Admiralty to remove ships from their stations was never questioned, even by the promoters of the proposed Bill: and at the very time when the agitation for the better protection of the colonies and for more rigid rules to restrain the movements of stationed ships was at its height, the Admiralty did not hesitate to assemble all the Barbados and Leeward Islands ships at Antigua to make up a squadron for Knowles to employ in the attacks upon La Guayra and Puerto Cabello—places a long way to leeward of their proper stations<sup>1</sup>. When Captain Ward of the 'Tartar' left his station for England, in spite of strong protests on the part of Governor Glen of Carolina, who pointed out to him in writing that by his instructions he was not to proceed upon any service until he had received the concurrence of the Governor and Council, the fact that he had instructions from the Admirals to proceed to England was held to be sufficient to cover him from blame<sup>2</sup>. The trade of South Carolina was no unimportant matter however. Two hundred sail to the value of half a million sterling cleared annually from the ports, and there was a real need for the constant presence of a ship of war to prevent the privateers of the enemy from preying upon it, these vessels coming from Havana, San Augustin and even from Cape François.

Privateers, indeed, are reported throughout the war on all parts of the coast of the northern colonies. The Governor of New Jersey wrote on September 28th, 1747, saying that from the Capes of Delaware to Sandy Hook the coast was infested with them. Eleven sail had been taken but three weeks before off the Capes, and he prayed that some ships might be stationed at New Jersey for the protection of the coast and the trade. As usual, the wars of Queen Anne were referred to. "In Queen Ann's war," he wrote, "there was always one and sometimes two ships of war at New York and the same at New England, but now there is none at either place that (*sic*) the French and Spanish privateers insult these coasts and harbours without control<sup>3</sup>." That some measures were required other than the allocation of ships of war which were liable in the general interests to be removed was the opinion of Warren. Writing to Anson, he said: "It is my opinion they [the colonies] could do nothing that could contribute more than by arming some proper vessels to guard their own coast and trade, which should be in some measure on the foot of the King's ships, or at

<sup>1</sup> Out letters. September 27th, 1742.

<sup>2</sup> Letters from Colonies. In letters 3818 for the complaint of the Governor: and Captains' letters, W. 1747, for Ward's reply to the complaint.

<sup>3</sup> Letters from Colonies. In letters 3818.

least never to be molested by them<sup>1</sup>." Warren's suggestion amounts to the formation of local sea militia which should be supported by the colonies themselves and would serve to protect them against raids and privateers. Their protection against great expeditions must still rest with the Royal Navy; and Warren's other suggestion for the formation of a detached squadron of eight fast sailing ships of the line, which should have open orders to follow the enemy wherever he might go, completes, in conjunction with the Western and Mediterranean squadrons, a scheme of naval defence. A strong squadron cruising to the westward would form the first line of defence across which the enemy would have to pass his transports; if he succeeded in evading this squadron a detachment of it could at once be sent in pursuit to any part of the world; and on the other side, there would be the small vessels of the local flotillas ready stationed to attack the transports when they arrived. It will be remembered that the instructions to the Admirals in the Mediterranean contained a clause directing them to detach ships to the West Indies if the enemy should have sailed thither.

Although the colonies generally depended upon the Navy for their maritime defence, they did, when occasion became pressing, fit out and maintain ships at their own expense, the Governors having powers to grant commissions. In 1745 the legislature of Barbados fitted out two sloops for the defence of their coasts, and spent no less a sum than £19,440 upon the repair of those numerous batteries which line the leeward coasts of the island, and whose ruins now mark every small bay where a landing would be possible. The Province of Massachusetts fitted out a "frigate" at their own expense at about the same time; and in the later war, when the French took Grenada and St Vincent, Barbados becoming alarmed fitted out two vessels to act as scouts and watch the movements of the enemy so that the island might not be surprised<sup>2</sup>. Colonial cooperation was also looked for as early as 1738. Commanders upon the coast of Virginia were informed in their standing instructions that if in pursuing a frigate she should escape into shoal water whither his Majesty's ships could not follow her, the Government of Virginia would furnish a sloop, for which, however, his Majesty's ships were to provide the officers and crew<sup>3</sup>.

The stationed ships in the Leeward Islands and at Barbados were not retained after war broke out with France. The water round those islands then became an important theatre of operations, owing to the French possessions which lay side by side with the British colonies, and the stationed ships were collected together and made into a squadron, reinforced by ships from home. The Leeward Islands and Jamaica stations were then separated definitely, and squadrons were maintained at each whose duties were the protection of the trade and the colonies. The larger operations of the war never however reached to the coasts of the northern colonies, so that no permanent squadron was required in those parts and the duties of local defence continued to devolve upon stationed ships.

<sup>1</sup> Warren to Anson. Anson Correspondence, B.M. Add. MS. 15955.

<sup>2</sup> Schomburgh's *History of the West Indies*, p. 327 *et seq.* Bryant Edwards's *History of the West Indies*.

<sup>3</sup> Instructions to Captain Sir Yelverton Peyton, May 9th, 1738. Out letters.

There can be little doubt that the main policy of colonial defence as arranged by the Admiralty was a correct one. It was necessary to station ships in various localities for protection against privateers, and dispersion was unavoidable. The ships thus dispersed were, however, the weakest which could effectually carry out their object, and concentration in case of danger was provided for. While the Captains were directed to consult with the Governors as to their operations, they were not under the orders of the Governors and thus could not be expressed as the wishes of the latter commands, and their ships translated into units of fixed defence. That the Governors should desire that the control of the ships appointed to the defence of their territories should be in their own hands is but natural; but it would infallibly have led to a scattering of force with weakness everywhere and cooperation nowhere. Each Governor would of necessity consider first the safety and interests of the island or province committed to his charge<sup>1</sup>, and his first thoughts regarding the disposition of any forces under his command would be connected with its effect on the security of his territories. In a similar manner the thoughts of an Admiral in considering the disposition of squadrons are liable to be directed towards the waters within the limits of his station—as Mathews's views, for instance, in 1744 were centred upon Italy, and Knowles's in 1745 upon the Leeward Islands. There is nothing blameworthy in this view. We have, indeed, both Wellington's and Nelson's views as to its naturalness and correctness. But the lesson it furnishes is that so far as it lies in the power of the Administration they should avoid any policy which tends to place naval forces which may be required elsewhere, under the control of any local body or Government. With the best intentions in the world it is difficult for local Governments to avoid taking the very human measure of retaining in their own areas every ship and man they possibly can, in case they should be required; and it would be unwise for any Administration to count upon the cooperation in other waters of any vessels which are under purely local control when danger, or what appears to be danger, threatens the local area. Such ships and other craft whose functions are purely local may well, as Warren suggested, be raised, maintained and administered by the local Governments; but as to all other vessels, it must of necessity be a better policy to place them under the central authority which is able to take a view of the war as a whole, to select in which areas lie the vital objectives both of themselves and of the enemy, and to employ the Navy accordingly.

This brief outline of the method employed to defend the colonies may be concluded with a copy of the Instructions to Captain Peter Warren of the 'Squirrel,' issued in 1742. These are most comprehensive, and are typical of the instructions to all Commanders; they embody the Standing Orders of the time, and represent the policy of defence in a very full and clear manner.

<sup>1</sup> See Captain Legge's remarks on this subject in his memorandum, p. 69.

*Instructions to Captain Warren, H.M.S. 'Squirrel.'*

Whereas we have appointed H.M. ship under your command to attend on the colony of New York in the room of the 'Gosport' which we have ordered to attend on New England, you are hereby required and directed as soon as she shall be in readiness to proceed to sea to make enquiry for any trade bound your way, and to take all such as are ready, and willing to accompany you, under your command and protection, as far as their way and yours shall lie together, and proceed to the Island of Madeira, where you are to take in what wine is necessary for the use of the ship's company, instead of beer, and then without loss of time to proceed on your voyage to New York.

When you arrive at New York you are to communicate these our instructions to the Governor and Council of that Province, and to consult and advise with them, from time to time, in what manner the ship you command may be best employed in guarding their coasts, and securing the trade of that colony from any attempts of the enemy, and to govern yourself according to what shall be agreed on, using your best endeavours to take or destroy all such ships or vessels of the enemy, as shall come upon the coasts of the said colony.

And whereas we have directed the Captains of his Majesty's ships attending on New England on the one hand, and on Virginia on the other, to hold a constant correspondence with you, you are, when you shall find the enemy's ships to be too strong for you, to send immediate advice thereof to the captain of one or both of the said ships, if it shall be necessary, whom we have directed to repair to your assistance, and you are to endeavour jointly to take or destroy them. And if the Captains of the said ships shall at any time send you notice of the enemy being too strong for them, you are with all possible diligence to repair to their assistance, communicating in the first place the intelligence you have received to the Governor and Council of New York and receiving their concurrence for your so doing; and when the service is performed you are to return directly to your station.

And whereas we have received a Memorial from the proprietors of Pennsylvania, representing that the trade on both sides the River and Bay of Delawar is very considerable, and praying that a ship may be stationed in that Bay to protect the trade from the enemy's privateers, you are hereby required and directed, when you are out at sea with his Majesty's ship under your command cruising, to extend your cruise as far as the Capes of the said River, and if you get intelligence of any of the enemy's ships or vessels, to use your utmost endeavours to take or destroy them.

And whereas the Captains of his Majesty's ships stationed in America have of late years taken a very unwarrantable liberty of lying in port with their ships for the greatest part of the time they have remained abroad, to the dishonour of his Majesty's service and the prejudice of the colonies for whose protection they are appointed; and we being determined not to suffer any such neglect for the future, do hereby strictly charge and direct you to keep constantly at sea when the weather will permit and cruise in proper stations for meeting with the enemy's ships or privateers, and for

protecting the trade of his Majesty's subjects, and guarding the said Colony from any attempts of the enemy.

You are not to fail to transmit to us once in every two months an exact copy of your journal, that it may be seen what care and diligence you have used in putting our instructions in execution.

And in order to enable you the better to keep the ship under your command in a good condition to cruise and protect the trade, as well as to annoy the enemy, you are to cause her to be cleaned once in six months at such times as it can be most conveniently done; and as we have given instructions to the Captains of the ships stationed at the Bahama Islands, North and South Carolina, Virginia, and New England to acquaint you with the time they intend to clean their ships, so are you likewise to give them notice of the time when you design to clean your ship, and to agree together in the times of cleaning in such manner that all, or the most part of his Majesty's ships be not in port at the same time, leaving the coasts and trade exposed to the enemy.

When the ship you command is in want of provisions you are to apply to the contractors of the victualling at New York for the same, and never to leave the said colony defenceless by going elsewhere to victual: and you are to take on board no more provisions at a time than are necessary for the service on which you are employed.

When the winter season approaches so that the seas on the coasts of New York and New England become dangerous and impracticable for ships to cruise in, which generally happens about the middle of November, you are to take the ship stationed at New England under your command, and having given early notice beforehand to the several Governments in New York and New England of the time of your intended departure, and of the place for the rendezvous of their trade bound to the West Indies, or to load salt at Saltitudoes, you are accordingly to proceed with the said man-of-war and trade to Barbadoes, if any are bound there, and from thence to the Leeward Islands, taking his Majesty's ships stationed at Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands under your command while you remain in those seas, their Captains being hereby directed to follow your orders.

You are to appoint proper convoy for the protection of the trade to Saltitudoes and Jamaica with directions to their commanders to return to you as soon as those services are performed.

You are to employ the ships under your command in the best manner for the protection of his Majesty's Island of Barbadoes and of the Leeward Islands, according to the instructions we have given to the commanders of his Majesty's ships employed on those stations, a copy of which you will receive herewith attested by our Secretary, making ever the security and defence of those islands the constant object of your care and attention.

You are to inform yourself of the routes which Spanish ships coming from Europe make in the American seas and at what places they usually touch for intelligence or refreshment, and accordingly to endeavour to intercept them, as far as is consistent with your principal point, which is the protection of the aforesaid islands.

You are to inform yourself of the state of English harbour in Antegoa, of its fitness for careening and refitting his Majesty's ships, and of the

condition of the careening place and storehouses, and to report the same to us, as also your opinion whether anything further is necessary to be done there for making the same more useful and commodious to his Majesty's service, regard being had to frugality and good husbandry, and to propose nothing but what is absolutely necessary to be done.

You are to continue on the service of guarding his Majesty's aforesaid islands until the latter end of February or the beginning of March, as the season shall happen to prove, and then leaving the ships stationed at Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands to follow the instructions they have received from us, you are to return together with the station ship of New England, to your several colonies, pursuing such a Route as may be the most likely to meet with the enemy's privateers or which is the usual track of our trade, and diligently to attend the service of the said colonies according to the instructions you have respectively received.

You are not to hoist the Union Flag on board the ship you command on account of the Governor's being on board, or on any other pretence whatever.

In case of death of any of your officers you are to appoint such other persons belonging to the ship to act in their room as by the quality of their employments ought to succeed therein.

When you receive orders to return to Great Britain you are to take in no more provisions than shall be sufficient to complete what you may have on board to three months of all species at whole allowance, upon the penalty of making good what damage his Majesty may otherwise receive thereby.

You are by all opportunities to transmit to our Secretary, for our information, an account of your proceedings, and of the condition of the ship under your command, as to the number of men and all other particulars. And in case of inability by sickness or otherwise to be careful to leave these our instructions with the next commanding officer who is hereby required diligently to put them in execution.

14 August 1742.

Winchelsea.  
A. Hamilton.  
Geo. Lee.

## APPENDIX C

### A FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR ATTACK ON BRITISH TRADE

A SYSTEM of trade attack which had its counterpart in later wars made its appearance in this war in the form of an attempt to establish a relationship between the land and sea campaigns and finance; and it deserves notice when the strategical ideas of the time are under review.

A correspondent writing from St Germain-en-Laye on October 4th, 1745, pointed out<sup>1</sup> that the French settlements in the East Indies were threatened with attack, and that their loss would be a severe blow. "What equivalent," he says, "could we give the English in case of peace, as having nothing from them notwithstanding all our conquests?" He therefore proposed a counter blow. The French East India Company, assisted by the King, should arm 15 of their ships and use them for war instead of commerce. Of these, four should cruise in the entry to the China seas, using Macao and Manila as bases. Eleven should attack Madras, using the troops of the Pondicherry garrison, and when that settlement was taken, should split into cruising squadrons, four ships off the coasts of Malabar, Bombay and Surat, two off the mouth of the Red sea, and seven off the Ganges, using Pondicherry and Mauritius as bases according to the monsoon. "This scheme," said the writer, "would ruin British trade, for it would be unexpected by the English who would continue sending their ships as usual; and though the Dutch and English were allies, a French success would not be regretted by the former who were already jealous of the growth of English trade and would not mind seeing it clipped." Besides this, a squadron of King's ships should cruise off St Helena, a focal point since the British India ships always put in there on their return voyage between February and July.

Developing his views still further the writer proposed sending to sea five or six squadrons of five or six ships each, dispersed between the Dogger Bank and the Mediterranean. "Thirty men-of-war at sea would oblige the English to put out forty to oppose us and almost as many more to convoy their trade. This is without dispute. Under the protection of our thirty ships of war there would be at sea sixty more privateers than there are already, because private persons seeing squadrons dispersed up and down under which privateers may take refuge in case of need, would be encouraged to go to the charge of fitting them out... The addition of sixty privateers would lay the English under the further necessity of increasing the number of their ships of war, so that upon a nice calculation where the King would spend one pistole at sea it would cost England three; besides, it would be very hard if that pistole itself should not return to his Majesty. Consequently," concludes the writer, "England instead of raising men to

<sup>1</sup> The paper is in Captains' letters, Saumarez, 1745. A copy was sent to the Commander-in-Chief in the East Indies and caused some apprehension at the time.

send to Flanders, especially at this present time of her great concern within<sup>1</sup> would lie under the necessity of suspending her despatch of men abroad, and be obliged to make levies for the sea, at least two to our one. Her land forces would be thereby weakened in Flanders, consequently we should not be obliged to recruit or increase ours to oppose them; and the expense which such an augmentation of our forces by land would require, being applied to the sea-service, would be almost sufficient to make good the charge of the above mentioned six squadrons; thus the necessary funds, or at least the major part of them, are already found."

The schemes are characteristic of French thought at the time. Instead of combined action of the Bourbon navies against the British fleet we find each acting separately, still further subdividing into scattered squadrons which would exist only on sufferance. That it would have been an annoying scheme is beyond doubt. But the same 30 to 36 ships operating as a fleet against our Western Squadron would have been more than an inconvenience; it would have strained our resources to the utmost, and more so if the Spanish ships cooperated.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.* the Jacobite rising, which, at that moment was at its height.



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